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ABSTRACT

This document brings together six papers on language skills and language arts teaching of gifted students. "The State of the Art Issues in Language Study for High Ability Learners: Thinking about Language with Gifted Children" (Michael Clay Thompson) considers two areas traditionally included in discussions of language study--grammar and vocabulary--and a third area that should be included--the study of aesthetic language structures that interact with and have an impact on syntax. "Reading, Language, and Literacy Development" (Jane M. Bailey) points out that meaning is the linking concept among reading, language, and literacy, and contends that the role of schools is to provide first, a knowledge base upon which students can build networks of connectors and second, a curricular environment to pose the necessary ambiguities to extend those networks. "Teaching with Writing: The State of the Art" (Colleen Kennedy) describes a writing pedagogy that helps students understand the extended audience and larger purpose of writing, by integrating writing with the teaching of content areas throughout the curriculum and from kindergarten through college. "Issues in Contemporary Oral Communication Instruction" (Ann L. Chaney) offers a working definition of oral communication, a review of pedagogical implications, and suggestions for adaptation of concept and skill instruction to gifted elementary and middle school students. "The Concept of Change: Interdisciplinary Meaning and Inquiry" (Linda Neal Boyce) explores the concept of change in several disciplines, identifies key resources that focus on change, and examines the way the concept of change has been applied in the National Language Arts Project for High Ability Learners. "Creating a New Language Arts Curriculum for High Ability Learners" (Joyce VanTassel-Baska) presents a framework for developing a language arts curriculum that makes meaning through inquiry, uses multicultural literature, is conceptually oriented, incorporates all major strands of the language arts, and highlights gifted education features. (Each paper contains references.) (JDD)

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Contributing Authors:

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The State of the Art Issues In Language Study for High Ability Learners: Thinking about Language with Gifted Children

by
Michael Clay Thompson

In *Growing Up Gifted*, Barbara Clark (1988) reports a typical-sounding conversation between a grandmother and her granddaughter:

> "I'm playing with my chalkboard."
> "You are?"
> "Yes. I played with it yesterday, too."
> "Really?"
> "Don't you remember? You gave it to me for my happy birthday last Wednesday."

What makes the conversation atypical, and significant, is that at the time of the conversation the granddaughter is less than two years old—twenty-two months, to be precise. This loquacious toddler's verbal precocity illustrates, as would a thousand other similar stories, the need for what has been called a *differentiated curriculum* for the gifted child. Unfortunately, there has been little agreement about what a differentiated curriculum should contain. Amid increasing calls for rigor and substance, there is widespread agreement that a differentiated curriculum should contain advanced and enhanced reading and writing opportunities, but there is less consensus about what should be read, or what should be written.

On the subject of formal language study, including grammar, vocabulary, and other elements to be discussed below, little has been written. In fact, formal language study sometimes receives no mention at all, even in discussions of language arts for the gifted. Gallagher (1975), for example, emphasizes reading and the incorporation of values education into language arts. Clark (1988) focuses on bibliotherapy and the use of mind maps, developed by Buzan, to assist individualization and improve reading skills. A review of *Gifted Child Quarterly* and *Roeper Review* from 1987 to the present reveals no article in either publication specifically addressing the role of formal language study in the education of gifted students, except for one article on orthography (Olson, 1988). It should not be inferred that these and other leading scholars in the field of gifted education do not support formal language study in gifted education; rather, this seems to be an area that remains to be addressed through research. Thus far, research as it refers to language arts in gifted education has concentrated on other important issues: the identification of students who are gifted in language arts, on language arts as one of a multitude of possible forms of giftedness, and on the difficulties associated with identifying some minority and disadvantaged gifted children who might not exhibit superior abilities in language arts. The *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* devoted a Spring 1991 special edition to the "underserved gifted" who might not qualify for gifted programs based on traditional, highly verbal identification instruments (Coleman, 1991).

In recent years, however, strong support for language study in gifted education has come from VanTassel-Baska (1988), Parker (1989), and Thompson (1991). Parker stresses the importance of morphology, orthography, syntax, and vocabulary development. In addition to stressing the importance of foreign language, VanTassel-Baska notes that a "sound verbal arts program for the gifted needs to include a strong language study element that allows students to understand the English language from a variety of perspectives." Recommended perspectives include syntax, usage, vocabulary development, analogies, etymology, semantics, linguistics, and the history of language.

The fundamental question is, is language study an essential component of the education of gifted children, and if so, why?

The unambiguous and resounding answer to this question is that language study is absolutely essential, for cogent reasons that can be articulated to anyone's satisfaction. In examining these reasons, I will consider two areas that are traditionally included in discussions of language study: grammar (syntax) and vocabulary (diction, etymology, analogy), and a third area that is not usually, but must be, included in the discussion: poetics, by which I mean, not the study of poetry, but the study of aesthetic language structures that interact with and have an impact on syntax. Meaning is accomplished through systematic constructions of grammar, diction, and poetics.

Must we study language? Yes. We are all familiar with numerous, important, practical reasons, frequently cited, for studying language: it prepares the student for advanced intellectual work of all forms, it is necessary to the art of good writing, it is necessary for the advanced levels of communication required in many exciting professions. These reasons are as valid and significant as their advocates believe.

But there are other, even more profound reasons why language must be studied, and it is these reasons that will mean most to gifted children, to whom every living moment seems to be a quest for understanding. *Language is a medium for the mind.* As water to fish, or air to birds, words and sentences are the substance through which our ideas glide. Language is the ecosphere of the mind. Our thoughts pass from sentence to sentence, our thoughts stream forth in sequences of sentences, we receive the thoughts of others in streams of sentences, and we exist continually in a personal, social, and technological environment of sentences. Not to know about language is to be ignorant of the very medium we inhabit. In addition, *language is a manifestation of the mind.* Through spoken and printed language, we may know ourselves, and we may know the selves of others, both living and dead. The complexity, order, and clarity of our syntax; the subtlety, originality, and variety of our diction; the sensitivity, gentility, and aesthetics of our expression, these things reveal, even to ourselves, who we are, what we think about, what we care about, and what the contents of our inmost personalities are. The Oracle of Delphi's dictum, *know thyself*, would be difficult to implement in the absence of language. And for thousands of years it is this dictum that has, above the myriad mundane concerns of economy and practicality, motivated the still-fundamental concerns of human imagination, and that we know by the names of science, philosophy, mathematics, poetry, history, art, music, and literature.

Language study, in other words, is no less a fundamental probing of being than astronomy or microbiology. Therefore, if we ask what is the state of the art in language study, the answer, in part, is that the state of the art is humility in the face of the mysterious. What has been profound remains profound. We are still exploring, still sailing forth into phenomena of language that are yet unnamed, unmapped, unsuspected. It is wonderful that this is so, that language continues to be a great subject, exciting and fresh. We must remind ourselves that in exploring a thing so wondrous, a state of wonder is highly appropriate: in all language study, a mental state akin to play, to happy exploration, is important. Torrance (1970) has emphasized the importance of making the familiar strange, and of playing with words, playing with metaphor, and of overcoming the "work-play dichotomy" that makes it sinful to have fun working. Students who study language through grammar or etymology should be led as to the edge of the deep, probing into the internal organs of sentences as into the protoplasm of protozoans.

Grammar

What is grammar? If asked this question, many veteran students of grammar "units" would be unable to answer. Others would answer by example, saying that it was the study of nouns, verbs, and so on. But why do we study parts of speech, and phrases, and clauses? Because *grammar is a way of thinking about language.* It is an untouted, but superb, form of higher-order thinking. Using grammar, we can think about our ideas, because our ideas are captured in the amber of sentences, where grammar allows us to name their parts, consider their rearrangement, examine the way they are made, and discover their secrets of originality and creativity.

An explanation of the elements of grammar is, of course, beyond the scope of this paper, but there are a number of points that should be made about the place of grammar in the education of gifted children:

1. Critical and creative thinking. Like logic, mathematics, and creative problem-solving, grammar is a rigorous method of higher-order thinking. It is an exceptional tool for making logical, structural, and aesthetic decisions in writing and speaking one's own ideas. Grammar is also an exceptional tool for investigating the differences in style between authors, or for peering into the loveliness of a line of poetry.

2. Clarity clarified. In contrast to its reputation as an arid, definitional subject, grammar is actually a source of profound insight into the meaning of clarity. Like ancient cosmic rays that give contemporary astronomers a ghostly after-image of the big bang, the ordinary sentence—the simple device in which we place our every thought—contains a ghostly image of the hidden binary nature of intellectual being, for at the center of the seemingly infinite variations of form that sentences take, there is an astounding consistency: the subject/predicate binary structure. This most common and therefore least appreciated subject/predicate structure, so pure in its simplicity and so well-known that its meaning is unsuspected, suggests the two simple things the mind always needs for clarity: *what you are talking about, and what you are saying about it.* At the sentence level, what is your subject, and what are you predicating? At the paragraph level, what is your subject, and what are you predicating? At the topic level, what is your subject, and what are you predicating? The sentence is a model of the mind; its two parts are the mind's two needs.

3. Grammar is not self-contained. Grammar serves meaning, and not conversely. You cannot seek within grammar for the all causes of grammatical structure; these causes are often external. A sentence will not be simple, complex, or compound because of the rules of grammar; it will have clause structure suitable to the needs of the ideas to be communicated. The reason for the structure does not lie within the structure. Rather, the rules of grammar are such that they bend themselves to the needs of meaning and poetics—and these determine the success of the communication. You might have a series of short, simple sentences because the essential nature of the moment to be communicated—say, Cornwall's dying gasps in Shakespeare's *King Lear*—requires a series of terrible silences, that position themselves

tragically between the sentences: "I have received a hurt. Follow me, lady. Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace. Untimely comes this hurt; give me your arm." There is nothing, internal to grammar, which dictates the use of these staccato, clipped sentences; rather, it is Cornwall's pain, his inability to utter more than a few words at a breath, which explains the syntax.

4. The impossible simplicity paradox. The paradox of teaching basic, traditional grammar is that it is a small and simple subject that is impossible for students to master. Teachers have had such difficulty teaching basic grammar that many have abandoned the effort, and it is not uncommon to read articles in professional publications advocating the abandonment of grammar instruction. The paradox can be overcome by realizing that grammar is a subject that is not safely sampled. Like a light, it does not come on until all of the wires are connected. Once students have understood all four levels of traditional grammar—parts of speech, parts of the sentence, phrases, and clauses—and have repeatedly used all four levels to examine various sentences, the apparent difficulty of grammar dissolves into a clarity and enthusiasm for looking again at more sentences. Four-level analysis should regularly be applied to sentences from poems and novels, as well as to sentences written by students themselves.

5. Withholding grammar. Furthermore, the impossible simplicity of grammar is also a function of the seemingly sensible practice of protracting grammar study throughout the year, studying parts of speech during the first academic quarter, parts of the sentence the second, phrases the third, and clauses the fourth. The effect of this well-intentioned and sincere method is academic catastrophe; it is a method of language study which obstructs the goal of language study: students cannot use in October what they will not learn until May. Grammar must be studied in its entirety at the beginning of the academic year, and then used throughout the year as *a way of thinking about language* as it occurs in poems, plays, novels, and student writing. Once a four-level review has been completed in September, every sentence examined thereafter serves as a reminder that deepens a student's understanding of grammar's exciting analytical power. Teachers who pride themselves on their year-long thorough and systematic study of grammar should understand that gifted students grasp concepts and need applications with astonishing swiftness; these students do not need a protracted trek. An excellent three-week grammar program in September will equip students to study language all year long.

6. Process and content. Rote memory is as fatal to the study of grammar as it is to everything else; the study of grammar must be as fully human as possible. The ideas of grammar form an excellent content to which excellent processes must be applied, including such commonly encouraged thinking processes as cognition, synthesis, divergence, analysis, emotion, intuition, imagination, evaluation, aesthetics, and application. It is also important to understand that grammar is beautifully suitable to Socratic teaching, that a sentence is what might be termed a Socratic object, and that an open-ended discussion developing possible alternative descriptions of the grammar of a sentence and their respective merits is one of the most powerful and exciting experiences students can have. As explained in *The Magic Lens* (Thompson, 1991), another exciting way to develop students' ability to think the language of grammar is to use "mystery sentences," in which the teacher reads a precise description of the grammar of a famous sentence, challenging the students to figure out what the sentence is. The merit of this method is that the students are first given a hollow shell, a transparently empty grammar structure, and must comprehend it in its abstract architecture before they can make the synthetic connection from the hollow shell to the sentence, whose words alone they thought they knew. Examples of Mystery Sentences from *The Magic Lens*:

Mystery Sentences:

1. A children's story contains a famous compound declarative sentence distinguished by three independent clauses. A coordinating conjunction is used twice to join the three clauses together. Each clause contains a contraction of the first person singular subject pronoun and the helping verb *will*. The third clause contains a direct object and an adverb. The first two clauses contain only subjects and verbs. What is the sentence?

2. A famous sentence from Shakespeare begins with a compound infinitive and ends with a clause that contains a demonstrative pronoun as a subject, a present tense linking verb, a definite article, and a singular common noun as a subject complement. What is the sentence?

Answers:

1. I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down.
2. To be or not to be, that is the question. (Hamlet)

Vocabulary

Grammar makes visible the abstract architectures of ideas, but it is the words which these structures carry that are the substance of the ideas. Grammar without vocabulary is like a sentence diagram in which no words have been filled in. Students must turn their attention to words themselves, to the fine distinctions between so-called synonyms, to the fact that words empower not just expression but vision itself, and to the interiors of words as a hidden source of knowledge and insight. For the education of high ability learners, several aspects of word study are important:

1. Etymology. For students of English, the great system of Greek and Latin stems upon which thousands of English words are based is an incomparably important—in fact utterly essential—object of study. By using the Greek and Latin etymologies as a foundation for building students' vocabularies,

> . . . vocabulary is presented not as a set of lists of words but as a *system of thinking*, a way of building, analyzing, spelling, pronouncing, using, and choosing words. Just as a distant galaxy of stars appears in the telescope as a single luminous astronomical object, so in [etymology] it is the vocabulary *system* that appears as a fascinating language object, composed of thousands of sparkling words and word pieces. In this method, the system is not offered as a mere way of learning words, rather the example words serve to illustrate and expand the system in the student's mind. The system is the object of inquiry. The beauty of this approach is that the student finally knows far more than the short list of words encountered in the course; he or she also knows the tens of thousands of words that are not listed but that are *expressions of the system*. This is an approach that can accomplish much, even in one academic year; it is an approach that can have a significant, visible impact on a student's vocabulary and thought processes. (Thompson, 1990, p. 1)

2. Micropoems. A Greek-and-Latin-based vocabulary study accomplishes more than giving students intellectual comprehension of words: it gives students an appreciation of the aesthetic power of words; it reveals the archaeological *micropoems* (Thompson, 1992) of insight and perception captured in the construction of words. Words are made things, and there is reason in their making. Those who made them, did so thoughtfully. For this reason, words are often vessels of surprising beauty and insight. They are capsules of philosophy, they are micropoems. Even ordinary words take on a new depth and humanity when viewed in this way: we suddenly realize that to *respect* someone is to see (spect) him or her anew (re), and we remember the times we ourselves have *looked again* at someone who had been previously insignificant to us. Or in thinking about a *cadaver*, we realize the profound fact that a person has fallen (cad), and will never again move about in this green planet's gravitational field, where everything is pulled toward a center with the force, g. Or we poignantly realize that a *posthumous* award is granted after (post) burial in the earth (hum). Or we see the image of the *introvert* turned (vert) into (intro) himself, back to the threatening world. Though many words, broken down into their Greek or Latin components, are simply logical, many others are like the ones above—micropoems, hidden moments of insight and feeling, testimony to the humanity of our predecessors. Students who know only the dictionary definition surface of words and not the sub-meanings within the words will scarcely suspect the simplifying logic and poetic power of words, for these qualities are functions of the prefixes, stems, and suffixes which are discovered through etymology.

3. Perception. Among the great benefits conferred by the possession of a strong vocabulary, is the ability to perceive more of the world's phenomena than one would perceive with a small vocabulary. In learning the name of something, we are often apprised of its existence, and having its name, we begin to notice its presence. This enlightenment of vocabulary never occurs to some, who believe that all unknown words are merely unnecessary synonyms of the same words they already know. But once, for example, you learn what an *invidious* compliment is, you begin to alertly perceive the envy-causing compliments which gratify the recipient but leave a companion on the outside, looking (vid) in (in).

4. The history of English. Gifted students will love learning about the thrilling history of English, that pile of linguistic rubble: Learish Celts conquered by Romans, Romans withdrawing from the sceptered isle to save the doomed empire from Alaric and his dastardly Visigoths, Germanic Anglo-Saxons crossing the Channel with short words (*cow, pigge, deer*); William's Norman French of Viking descent bringing victorious French words (*beef, pork, venison*); the addition of more Greek and Latin words through scholarship in the Middle Ages; conquerings, battles, soldiers in conflict—grammars and dictions in conflict. English speaking students should know that they speak a synthesized confusion of tongues and syntaxes left over from two thousand years of tumultuous history; this too is part of self-knowledge.

Poetics

Though grammar and vocabulary are absorbing and worthy subjects in themselves, it is only when we apply them to wild sentences, encountered unanticipated in novels, poems, and essays, that we discover what breathtaking tools they are. It is then, in the presence of an ill-behaved, stubborn sentence, when we are wrestling with the simplified categories of basic grammar and trying to force the square peg of the sentence into the round hole of the four-level grammar terminology, that our thinking about grammar and diction come alive, and it is then that we often realize that grammar is not enough, that something is still unaccounted for, and that in order to really explain why the sentence used three prepositional phrases, or a series of specific adjectives, of a convoluted Chinese-box clause structure, we must turn to elements of poetics. For upon the poetics, the grammar is based.

I am saying that in studying grammar, one is positively forced, kicking and screaming if necessary, to study poetics, because the grammar is a function of poetics. And not conversely.

Just as an explanation of the elements of grammar is beyond the scope of this paper, so is an explanation of the elements of poetics. But I mean by *poetics* such typical things as rhyme, meter, figure of speech. I mean assonance, consonance, and alliteration (Yeats's "I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore"). I mean end-stopped, enjambed, and endless lines. I mean the interplay of vowels, consonants, and silences, the rhythms (Whose woods these are I think I know) and a-rhythms of language. I mean thin, nasal, scratchy sounds (Shakespeare's "Fillet of a fenny snake, in the cauldron boil and bake") and round, soft sounds ("Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"), bass notes (Whole lotta . . . goin'on) and high notes (shakin'); I mean the music of speech. These elements are always present, whether they are deliberately crafted into the sentence or not, and they have much to do with our delight in sentences, our memory of sentences, our admiration of sentences, and our comprehension of sentences. Poetics is typically (and artificially) studied only during the study of poems, but these factors are powerfully present in novels, plays, essays, political speeches, and even in ordinary conversation.

To show why it is necessary to include poetics in a discussion of language study focussing on grammar, let us inspect a well-known political sentence, from Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." The sentence is, "Fourscore and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

We know that the entire speech was so short—in an age when speeches typically lasted one to two hours—that Lincoln was finished with it before the audience had quieted down. A newspaper reporter gasped aloud, "Is that all, Mr. President?" It was. And Lincoln had worked on this tiny speech for weeks; in fact, he had kept it in his hat, taking it out repeatedly during the course of each day to scratch out a word or to insert a phrase. It was a meticulously written speech. And when we look at the words, we begin to wonder about the curiosities and anomalies we see.

Why did Lincoln use the phrase "four score and seven" rather than the more direct "eighty-seven"?
Why did he choose the words "brought forth"?
Why did he disturb the grammar from the expected order? We would have expected something like this: Eighty-seven years ago, our forefathers created a new nation upon this continent.

It is impossible to explain the diction and syntax of Lincoln's brilliant sentence without reference to the poetics, for Lincoln was using the music of the voice to enhance and support his meaning, and only by hearing the music can we understand the grammar. For the first fourteen words, Lincoln is playing the bass notes, the o's and u's enriched by the r's. Hear the sounds: four, score, year, ago, our, fore/father, brought, forth, upon, continent. Lincoln is playing an oboe, or a bassoon. And then, suddenly, rising above the low tones, we have sounds, alliterated with n's, which are higher and lighter, a flute: new, nation. And all of this leads to the finale:

the most important word, uttered last so that it echoes in the silence at the end of the sentence: *equal. Equal.*

Fourscore and seven **years** ago, **our forefathers brought forth**, **upon** this **con**tinent, a *new* nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created EQUAL.

We call these devices *assonance, consonance, alliteration*, and so forth, but language study takes us beyond terminology, whether of grammar, vocabulary, or poetics, to an awareness of the vital interplay and sensitivity revealed by the study of language.

Conclusion

For the education of highly able learners, formal language study is an essential component, perfectly suited for the differentiated curriculum such children need. When we combine grammar, vocabulary, and poetics, we have a content that is rigorous, abstract, and classic. We have a content that is both practical and intellectual, and that applies with equal import to the words of Kennedy, Camus, Shelley, and Shakespeare. For gifted children, we find that:

> Grammar should be taught early in the year, as completely as possible, and applied as a method of critical thinking to all forms of language.
> Vocabulary should include the study of Greek and Latin etymology, with special attention given to the aesthetic and intellectual surprises revealed by the etymology.
> Poetics must be considered as a factor which influences the choice of words and the structure of the syntax.

The one-year-and-ten-month-old granddaughter mentioned at the beginning of this discussion said to her grandmother, "Don't you remember? You gave it to me for my happy birthday last Wednesday." Six hundred and fifty days after her birth, she uttered these two sentences. The first is an interrogative sentence consisting of a contraction of the verb *do*, used in its auxiliary function to emphasize the main verb, and the modifying adverb *not* which derives from the Old English *nought*; a second person singular subject pronoun *you* (traceable back through Middle and Old English *ye* to Sanskrit) used as the subject of the verb *remember*, which comes from the Latin *rememorare*. Her second sentence is a simple declarative sentence consisting of the second person singular subject pronoun *you* used as the subject of the past tense singular action verb *gave* (the verb *give* traces back through Middle English and Old Norse), which acts on the neuter gender third person singular subject pronoun *it* as a direct object. The direct object is followed by an adverbial prepositional phrase *to me*, in which the preposition *to* indicates a relationship of direction between its object of preposition *me* and the verb *gave*, and this prepositional phrase is followed by a second prepositional phrase *for my happy birthday last Wednesday*, which is notable, among other things, for its reference to the chief god of the Germanic tribes, Woden, associated with the Norse god Odin. Now, this little girl probably never heard of Odin, or even Woden, but on the other hand, her brain whipped these sentences together spontaneously, at the speed of a telephone conversation, and she got it all right: there is no subject/verb disagreement, no pronoun reference error, no misplaced modifier.

> Smart girl.
> Just imagine what she will know by the age of two.

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Reading, Language, and Literacy Development

by
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Introduction

In order to map the current landscape of reading, language, and literacy issues, a flexible plotting technique is needed. In some cases, the map needs to be linearly drawn to demonstrate the chronology of language study. The progression from linguistics to psycholinguistics to sociopsycholinguistics is one such linear evolution. In other cases the map needs to be circularly drawn to capture literacy issues that have long been in existence but are being examined in new light. Dewey's experiential child-centered curricula has come full circle to influence whole language curricula in both subtle and bold ways. In all cases, there is the realization that a literacy map represents a changing landscape.

Certainly being literate in pre-industrial 1892 held different meaning than being literate in post-industrial 1992 which in turn will hold new meaning in hyper-informed 2092. As the present decade moves toward the twenty-first century, the clarifying question emerges: What does it mean to be literate in an information society? And ultimately, what role should schools play in developing that literacy?

The interplay among reading, language, and literacy is a key exchange in addressing those questions. Additionally, new forms of literacy are emerging. Issues such as computer-mediated communication (CMC) and types of discourse that characterize electronic spaces (Hawisher, 1) are percolating in the literature. These new forms of literacy may reshape our present understanding of reading and language.

Reading

The 1992 NAEP Reading Assessment: National Consensus Planning Project (Selden & Kapinus 1989) grappled with reconciling reading instruction differences for purposes of national assessment. The difficulty in developing a national reading assessment protocol clearly outlines not only the gap between theory (e.g., importance of reading in context) and practice (e.g., heavy curricular dependence on discrete word recognition skills), but also the divergent paths of reading theorists.

Behavioristic analyses of the reading process originated early in the twentieth century with the notion of associations or S-R (stimulus-response) bonds (Dole, Duffy et al., 1991, 240). According to behaviorists, reading can be broken down into a sequential set of subskills which can be used for programmed instruction and mastery learning reading exercises; i.e., mechanical assumptions frame the teaching of reading. This view naturally lends itself to text-driven curriculum wherein meaning resides in the actual text and the reader must articulate that meaning.

Cognitivists on the other hand emphasize the interaction between reader and text and the possibility of building meaning from the text based on a reader's existing knowledge and the context of the reading (p. 241). This is related to the constructivist view that students construct text meaning based on what they bring to the text. The inherent social and contextual framework which has been internally generated in a learner through both nature and nurture is brought to bear on the text in the form of the learner's innate ability and the environmental/social context which has formed the reader's frame of reference.

Cognitivists and constructivists see the reading process connected to a search for meaning; a search being conducted by a reader through a text in a framework of intellectual ability. "According to this view, even novice readers can behave like experts when presented with texts and tasks for which they possess appropriate knowledge. Conversely, even expert readers can be reduced to novices when presented with obscure or ambiguous texts (p. 241)." This notion highlights the importance of matching the level of the text with the ability (i.e., level of existing knowledge) of the student.

Historically, readability formulas have been the basis for levelizing students' texts. Thus, the intricate analysis of computing types of words, sentence lengths, and numbers of prepositional or qualifying phrases differentiated text difficulty. What is less apparent when text level is determined by formula is the intricate nuance of text meaning and the different levels of sophistication as inferred meaning is distinguished from stated meaning. The cognitive and constructivist theoretical framework makes clear the importance of presenting high ability students with reading material that is not only advanced on a standard readability formula scale but more importantly, advanced on the cognitive level of thought required to construct or generate text meaning.

The historical shift (circa 1970) from behaviorism to cognitivism became apparent as the microstructure sentence level of analysis by reading researchers gave way to the macrostructure study of relationships between whole episodes in stories. The concurrent study of memory and how information is mentally manipulated extended macrostructure analysis to schema theory. Schemata can be viewed as organized knowledge which when activated can assist in the construction of meaning. New information is matched to schema already in place which creates meaning (Marzano 1991, 3). Again, ability level comes into play in an important way. Students with a great deal of inherent organized knowledge have complex operational schemata in place to assist in the construction of meaning. In other words, they should be able to deal with the nuances of more intricate text than a student with fewer schema in place.

Studies of high ability learners consistently demonstrate their ability to integrate more advanced content at a younger age than their chronological peers. Thus it becomes critical that these students are offered advanced content material as soon as they are ready in order to generate the complex schemata that will enable them to read advanced level materials. This has implications across the curriculum as meaning generated through reading is referenced to a cross-discipline base of knowledge.

The strategic use of schema in a conscious way by a reader (i.e., awareness, monitoring, control, and evaluation) hints at a key to reading independence and a new strategy for increasing reading efficiency and profiency: metacognition. The self-regulating mechanisms of metacognition make this an incredible tool for higher level reading as it puts the reader in control of his or her own comprehension. Perhaps Maslow would consent to the notion of a self-actualized reader.

Metacognitive strategies require a level of self-awareness both during and after reading. For a student who needs to expend a great deal of effort on decoding and comprehension skills, metacognitive monitoring may be a detracting task. However, for high ability readers who spend little effort on decoding or comprehension, metacognitive reading may offer specific strategies for meaning generation. The reader is forced to face the realm of text evaluation issues and deal with the higher levels of cognitive thought.

Studies of reading instruction demonstrate the lag in practice behind theoretical advancement. Langer and Applebee found that teachers focus on specific content rather than how learners think about and manipulate the content (Langer 1990, 5). Teale & Sulzby (1989, 5) call to mind Durkin's 1987 finding of kindergarten curricula dependent on letter naming and sound matching worksheets. The infusion of higher order thinking opportunities into actual reading curricula is not well documented. And certainly evidence of metacognitive curriculum strategies is only beginning to surface. There is a great deal of research on the reading process itself; but very little research on specific curriculum and instruction issues; i.e., just what kind of curriculum works for what kind of student?

It is clear that content is important as the foundation of information which creates the network of schemata students reference as they read. Recent literature on whole language approaches to reading instruction is very process-oriented. Reference to the "what" of a knowledge base is fuzzy at best. However, cognitive theory points to the importance of both skills and knowledge in order to stabilize the internal cognitive structure. Skills and knowledge are often given shor shrift in gifted programs as they (i.e., reading skills including vocabulary development and a broad base of knowledge) are often seen as something inherent in gifted readers. The importance of *extending* the inherent skill and knowledge base of gifted learners is what becomes important for the curriculum to address.

The type and quality of the literature that students read is one way to extend a reader's skill and knowledge. Literature that is carefully selected for its literary value can be a key factor in stretching a student's reading capabilities. Baskin & Harris (1980) refer to a body of "intellectually demanding books." William J. Bennett notes in the report *First Lessons* (p. 21) that "Elementary schools...should be the place where children get exposed to 'the good stuff.'" Literature selection itself becomes a pivotal point in curriculum development. And once the selection is made (presuming it is at an instructional level which stretches reading capabilities and is of great inherent literary quality), students need to grapple with it in ways that manipulate higher order thinking skills.

Langer (1990) uses the example of literature as a curricular centerpiece which can either camouflage or highlight critical thinking skills, depending on how it is used. Marzano (1991, 21) offers an example of how literary response can be related to specific aspects of cognition in order to teach and reinforce thinking skills. The literary response strategies that Marzano proposes are designed to orchestrate a transactional duet between the reader and the text. As students explore literature through imagery, emotions, value, induction, extension and cognitive structuring they grapple with how the text is informed and how the learner is informed by the response strategy.

Langer (1990, 232) notes that a reader's literary understanding changes over time through the social relationship between the reader and the text. Using "think aloud protocols," Langer explored how students create meanings when they read. She concludes that readers take a variety of changing stances toward the text representing various levels of development of understanding (p. 253). The most advanced stances represent a higher level of literary understanding and are correlated to intellectual ability. The implication is that high ability students are able to interact with literary text in an intricate way which creates sophisticated meaning from the reading; more sophisticated than students of lesser ability can create.

The importance of the ability to construct, extend, and examine meaning within written texts is directly addressed by the NAEP Reading Consensus Project in the Reading Framework for the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress. Different types of reading (e.g., literary experience, for information, to perform a task) demand different strategic behaviors from readers. It is strategic flexibility (i.e., facility manipulating internal cognitive processes to build complex schematic structures which link and relate known information to new information) which appears to support reading proficiency. How to help students develop and extend meaningful strategic reading processes becomes an important curricular issue.

This implies the need to teach a core content base of information, both in the generic sense of a strong multidisciplinary content-based curriculum and in the specific sense of the language of literature--the specific skills and knowledge (e.g., use of metaphors, word etiology, etc.) which will help students grapple with meaning on a more advanced level. Students need to be provided with quality literature which stretches their reading abilities and they need help with measuring and monitoring their own abilities to make meaningful sense of the text.

Language

If the process of reading generates meaning, language is the means by which that meaning is manipulated and communicated. For Piaget, the symbolic-linguistic functioning allows language to represent thought which is a necessary tool for the construction of meaning. Language is the key ingredient for symbolic thought and communicative ability.

Exactly how language develops is debated through a theoretical dialogue similar to the reading instruction debate. The behaviorist school of thought as influenced by Skinner (1957) holds to the importance of environmental conditioning and imitation of models as the key to language development. The nativist camp as influenced by Chomsky (1974) holds to the notion of an innate device for acquiring language. Interactionists look at both genetic and environmental factors. Theorists such as Halliday (1973,1975) articulate a natural language theory that children learn language as they need it to communicate in a social world.

All theories seem to accept the notion that oral language develops first in a way that does not require formal teaching. The development of cooing to babble to meaningful words and sentences is a natural progression that has been documented in cross-cultural studies which indicate an intriguing universality to oral language development (Goodman 1990). The "why" and "how" of oral language development is what gets debated. The way language is developed through reading and writing skills is much less agreed upon. What used to seem like a long linear progression of skills which needed to be taught is now becoming theoretically bound in the notion of language integration; i.e., reading and writing skills that are learned (as opposed to "taught") concurrently.

The early linguistic (phonological and grammatical) study of language gave way to psycholinguistic considerations of how cognition is linked to language. Recent studies have explored the importance of social context to language development which gave birth to sociopsycholinguistics. The social aspects of literacy are being revealed as crucial to language development. The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky is credited with recognizing the critical function of the sociocultural context of development. Hall (1987, 11) notes that language is "rooted in the social relationships experienced by people." On a larger scale than individual social relationships is the entire cultural context of language development. This concept impacts how language is used and interpreted by various groups of people. Certainly it impacts what the reader brings to literature. Exactly how that affects a student's understanding of literature is a consideration being more carefully examined at this time.

Another avenue of exploration is student use of language to extend or inhibit meaning. Goodman & Goodman's (1977) analysis of children's oral reading miscues demonstrated students' control of the reading process by the types of oral reading mistakes they made (i.e., their use of language). Proficient readers make mistakes that generally don't interfere with meaning. By contrast, nonproficient readers make errors that directly impact reading comprehension (320). The nature of the oral miscues enabled Goodman & Goodman to study the interrelationship of language and meaning and how readers struggle toward meaning through language manipulation. Given proficient readers' apparent ability to glean meaning even with interfering oral reading mistakes, it would appear that the strategies they use for manipulating their language parallel (or more closely approximate) the actual "rules" embedded within the text.

One theoretical perspective on language manipulation holds that children create hypotheses; in a search for meaning (or "coherence") they build an actual interpretation system (Ferreiro 1990, 14). Children create a world of order and predictability demonstrated by the rules they construct to control their language. It appears that stages of conceptual development are related to the sophistication of a learner's rule system. Langer (1984) credits Bruner and Piaget for understanding children as active problem solvers whose "conceptual development is characterized by gradually more sophisticated, rule-governed systems of hypotheses or representations of the world (p. 109)."

How to extend this sophistication becomes the purview of curriculum and instruction. Bruner (1986) speaks to a "growing edge" of competence. Vygotsky accounts for a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) which is a range of tasks too hard for children to master alone but doable with an instructor (Bruner 1986, 73). This zone of proximal development becomes a measure of learning potential that emphasizes the social aspect of learning. From a theoretical perspective, it offers a reason why the instructional process is so important to cognitive development.

Cognitive growth implies increased understanding; an increased ability to make sense of the world. Language offers the tool to cultivate this growth. As Halliday (1973) notes, "Learning language is learning how to mean (24)." This development of sense or meaning through language is what literacy is all about.

This implies that students need practice using all forms of language; they need to articulate meaning through both oral and written discourse. Curriculum units which offer extended opportunities for students to use language as they interpret meaning from both the written and spoken word will support the development of language skills.

Literacy

Traditional studies of literacy (the ability to make sense of language) have been rooted in reading and writing instruction: the teaching aspect of specific literacy behaviors. The notion of emergent literacy adjusts the focus to the holistic learning aspect of literacy. This has shifted the research to the very early years of child development to qualitatively document how children come to make literate sense of the world through both receptive and expressive language.

Patterns are emerging that demonstrate children's abilities to use language to make sense of the spoken and written word. Patterns of learning include the notion that learning to read and write begins very early in life; the functions of literacy are integral to the learning process; reading and writing develop concurrently; and children learn through active engagement, constructing their understanding of how written language works (Teale & Sulzby 1989, 3-4). Literacy is not viewed as a perceptual process but rather, as a cognitive activity (Hall 1987, 5).

Whole language curricula which integrate reading with the other language arts and the creation of literacy environments for children seem to provide the instructional backdrop for extending and supporting children's emerging literacy skills. But Goodman would argue that a backdrop is not enough to ensure full literacy development. It does not happen by magic; nor is in inevitable (Hall 1987, 62). The child must engage in literate acts and be challenged to use his or her full cognitive abilities to construct meaning. How can this happen? That's what curriculum and instruction is all about. It's also the root of the symbiotic relationship between teaching and learning (Goodman 1990, 11).

The instructional implications stemming from the current landscape of reading, language, and literacy point to the need to bring students to new levels of understanding. Marzano (1991, 5-7) suggests providing a variety of literary response mode possibilities through complex tasks that students engage in for extended periods of time. Accuracy should be sought along with metacognitive monitoring and forcing the operation at the edge rather than the center of the student's ability. Ultimately, Marzano believes these strategies will facilitate knowledge change (8), elevating students to new heights.

Goodman (1990, 8) provides an important reminder of the value of teacher's questioning strategies in getting children to examine their own contradictions. The work of Pontecorvo and Zucchermaglio (1990, 70) points to a literacy development context that provides a social support system which includes tutoring (supporting the cognitive work of the child), co-constructing (helping children build knowledge), conflict (producing a cognitive conflict in order to change a child's representations), and arguing (collective reasoning toward higher processes and outcomes).

All of these processes and strategies are predicated on the use of meaningful text and materials so that students are able to manipulate increasingly advanced and sophisticated content, materials, and delivery systems. This is what engages the student in language manipulation, the ultimate source of mind engagement. "As both a cultural product and an instrument of thought, language, once acquired, inexorably shapes the successive transformations of mental behavior which constitute the growth of mind (Parker 1983, 142)."

Implications

There is a clear indication that the substance of the curricular experience is critical for literacy development. Even an acceptance of the notion of emergent literacy--the concept of the natural development and interrelatedness of all of the language arts--does not disavow the importance of providing both environment and experience to support growth of language constructs. Not all language arts experiences are equal, nor should they be. Theory points to the necessity of a curriculum that matches the ability level of the students not head-to-head, but in an interlocking one step-ahead fashion that builds onto a student's existing shema so as to extend the structure further.

Thus, it is not enough to simply provide reading materials, or writing time. Theory points to the need for appropriately challenging content--specific reading materials that engage the proficient reader on multi-levels of thought; writing exercises that differentiate audiences and allow written language to be manipulated in complex, meaningful ways; oral discourse opportunities which allow the development of argument and a line of reasoning.

Key to dealing with a core content base of knowledge, is the support of the teacher. The very nature of the questions asked can provide just the help for the student to extend his or her inner scaffold. It is by this extension that the student is able to get to a higher mental ground. Vygotsky notes that , "The adolescent who has mastered algebraic concepts has gained a vantage point from which he sees arithmetic concepts in a broader perspective (Bruner 1986, 73)." In other words, the extension of the math schema enables the student to reinterpret already learned material and transform that information. According to Vygotsky, this is done in a conscious manner; the sturdier schematic structure facilitates language manipulation in a self-reflective mode which puts new light (and new meaning) into previously learned material.

One way to trigger this is suggested in the work of Jerome Bruner (1986, 126) which argues for presenting the "hyopthetical nature of knowledge, its uncertainty, its invitation to further thought." It is by the nature of this presentation that students are invited to use thought, reflection, elaboration, and fantasy (p. 127). In other words, we take high level, captivating material and present it in a way that encourages students to explore its ambiguities.

Purves, Rogers and Soter (1990, 133) offer an important rationale statement for the study of quality literature. Literature is seen as offering:

> --extended experience or vicarious experience of other lives, both imagined and actual;
> --an opportunity for insight into human behavior and hidden thoughts;
> --examples of social insight by particularly sensitized people so that we extend our perspective of individuals; and
> --an aesthetic experience and insight into the creative experience.

Students exposed to these various literary opportunities are offered a menu of Bruner's "invitation to further thought." This further thought can be explored and extended through oral discourse in the nature of inquiry-based programs such as *Junior Great Books*. Students are given quality literature to read (what Michael Thompson would label "Classics") and then grapple with the text through textual analysis and discussion which is guided by carefully crafted questions. The ambiguity of the text remains in tact and students explore multiple levels of meaning as they come to grips with their individual interpretations of the story.

Such an opportunity for intellectual growth ought not be limited to students enrolled in *Junior Great Books*. High quality literature, textual analysis, creation of a line of thoughtful argument, and defense of interpretive meaning ought to be the core of any literature-based curriculum for high ability learners. Such a curriculum naturally promotes a strong content-base of information and raises the level of academic challenge for the student.

Intellectual growth can also be promoted through analyzing and developing specific lines of argument. The text *Arguing from Sources* (Kaufer, Geisler, & Neuwirth 1989) offers specific strategies for textual analysis along with concrete suggestions for graphically organizing information for analyzing and creating lines of argument.

Graphic representation of literary texts is yet another strategy for students to manipulate the thinking process involved in the literate act of reading. Marzano (1991) offers multiple suggestions for the use of mind mapping in generating the thinking necessary for a higher level of literacy.

Does grade level become an issue? Only if an artificial gate is created to prevent students from beginning meaningful literary analysis as soon as they have mastered the necessary decoding skills to unlock text meaning. How many elementary students are given the opportunity to formulate and articulate their own meanings to the texts they read? How many elementary students are given the opportunity to read the quality literature which enables text meaning to be explored on multiple levels? The gate seems to be already constructed. We only need to open the gate to give students the opportunity to engage in the literate discourse which both consumes and produces knowledge.

Conclusion

It is clear that meaning is the linking concept among reading, language, and literacy. Theorists may argue from different perspectives, but they converge on the importance of meaning construction to all aspects of literacy development. For now that meaning making largely evolves through the language arts--listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the future, meaning may be derived by encoding and decoding of a conceptually different nature.

That brings us full circle to the reason for a reading, language, and literacy map at all. What does it mean to be literate in an information society? The map tells us we must be able to glean meaning from the ever increasing amount of information being generated and transmitted. That requires the processing of more information at a faster pace. It requires sorting and disgarding unnecessary information. For sure it requires complex internal scaffolds, not as data banks to simply store information; rather, as networks of connectors to build new meaning upon existing knowledge.

The second fundamental question (What role should schools play in developing that literacy?) is perhaps the most exciting to answer. Schools ought to be providing both the knowledge base upon which students can build their scaffolds, and the curricular environment to pose the necessary ambiguities to extend those scaffolds. This means core content, advanced materials, and curricular encounters mediated by a teacher (i.e., facilitator) which enable students to use language in such ways so as to generate new intrinsic (and extrinsic!) knowledge.

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Teaching With Writing: The State of the Art

by
Colleen Kennedy

Definitions

Writing is purposeful. As Richard Larson reminds us, it is "an act of communication undertaken by one human being for one or more others"--that is, for an audience (1986, p. 111). However, writing has traditionally been taught as a series of rules for students to master and by which teachers might measure their proficiency. Over the past twenty years, two movements in writing pedagogy--toward teaching writing as a process, and toward teaching writing across the curriculum--have shifted the emphasis from rules to communication. However, much remains to be done toward developing students' and teachers' understanding of purpose and audience.

On one hand, the practical audience for every student's writing is the teacher; the practical purpose is to communicate some mastery (of subject matter, of method, etc.). However, the implied audience for the most successful academic writing is much larger: a group of hypothetical readers possessing specific knowledge. And the implied purpose is much broader: to inform, enlighten, persuade that audience. The implied audience and purpose form the context in which sophisticated writers write.

"State of the art" writing pedagogy will help students to understand and manipulate that context by encouraging them to write early and often. Paradoxically, all writing is at one point for an audience of one--the writer. Writing is a unique form of learning (Emig, 1977; Berthoff, 1978) because it allows us to see our thoughts and so develop them (Fulwiler, 1987). However, while education in the U.S. assigns reading as the key learning activity in every subject from kindergarten through college, it relegates writing to language studies and/or uses it predominantly as a means to evaluate (Fulwiler, 1987). State of the art pedagogy would redefine reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking as complex, interrelated comprehensive language activities (Fulwiler, 1987, p. 11). It would integrate all of these activities both horizontally (across subject areas) and vertically (from K through college).

This paper treats writing alone, in order to address contemporary issues emerging from a specific history and to suggest a few practical solutions. However, real pedagogical change will realize the potential of comprehensive language activities to increase learning at all levels and in all subject areas, and, more profoundly, to create knowledge by developing sophisticated understanding of disciplinary discourses.

History

New developments in pedagogy often occur in response to continuing problems. Larson's definition emphasizes two: 1) students frequently feel they have little to communicate to an audience, or, when they do have something to communicate, they have little conception of what a given audience expects or needs to know; 2) teachers frequently do not regard their students' writing as the communication of ideas, and therefore do little to help the student determine the appropriate context for that communication.

However, Patrick Hartwell's provocative studies of writers at elementary, secondary, and college levels (1984, 1985) indicate the difference between "good" and "bad" writing reflects not the mastery of rules, but writers' degree of awareness that they have something to say to someone. At all grade levels, the students identified to Hartwell as "strong" writers defined good writing as communicating interesting ideas in an interesting way, while students identified as "weak" writers defined good writing as mechanical correctness (Hartwell, 1984). Hartwell's findings suggest that the traditional emphasis on "correctness" and "proficiency" actually reinforces less successful writers' misconception about the purpose of writing and undermines writing's potential to develop thought.

Hartwell's studies show the counter-productive effect of years of rule-bound, product-oriented pedagogy. In product-oriented classes, teachers assign papers, evaluate the finished product (especially for mechanical proficiency), but never actually discuss how to write beyond generalized discussions of the subject area and/or rules for "good" writing. Such "writing" courses are distinguished from other courses in the subject area by their attention to style, usage, punctuation, etc. By contrast, in process-oriented classes, teachers demonstrate the actual process of writing, taking students through the successive stages of invention/discovery, organization, composition, revision, and editing. Although these stages are conceived as successive, they are also recursive; writers will usually cycle back through stages, learning as they revise, for example, that they need to re-organize the essay or even to rethink the thesis.

Process-oriented classes do not dismiss the importance of mechanics; however, they do place them in perspective and treat them late in the process (during revision and editing). The greatest contribution of the movement toward writing as process is its intense attention to the invention/discovery stage and the writer's ideas. At its best, process-oriented pedagogy subordinates mechanical concerns to the writer's purpose; mechanics become a means to help the writer reach an audience rather than an end by which the writer will be judged.

Because of its valuable attention to ideas, process-oriented pedagogy--informed by two different theories of composition--focuses heavily on the individual writer (Berlin, 1988; Faigley, 1986). The first of these theories, the expressivist, identifies good writing with the writer's self-knowledge. Its most well-known proponent, Peter Elbow, defines writing as a process of self-definition and expression; therefore, he argues, any writer's most important audience is her- or himself. The title of Elbow's most famous book, Writing Without Teachers (1973), suggests his own attitude toward teaching subject areas in the writing classroom. He believes one has to understand oneself before a subject area will have any relevance.

The other theory of composition, the cognitivist, is the slightly older one, and concerns itself less with writing as personal expression and more with identifying the psychological processes of writing. Janet Emig (1971, 1977) and Linda Flower and John Hayes (1981) defined and refined the successive stages of the writing process as cognitive "steps" every writer must complete. However, Emig's observations of twelfth graders (1971) led her to conclusions very compatible with Elbow's. She discovered that students, on their own initiative, would spend more time and care on reflexive writing--writing from their personal experience--than they did on extensive writing--writing based on an imposed content. She therefore urged teachers to emphasize personal writing in order to capitalize on students' increased interest and concern.

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Emig's and Elbow's theoretical conclusions have been reinforced by more practical matters. Guiding students through the writing process requires class time. As process-oriented pedagogies have developed, teachers have moved away from subject areas (usually literature) in order to free class time for discussion of writing.

Consequently, the other influential movement in writing pedagogy, toward writing across the curriculum (WAC), has come into an unnecessary and unproductive opposition with process models. The best WAC models use writing to teach subject areas and approach writing as a process. However, WAC is by definition content-based, and so less conducive to personal writing. Composition theorists have evaded this contradiction through the largely unfounded assumption that personal writing (including narrative and description) is a necessary first step toward analytical writing. Thus, at the university level the process model frequently dominates freshman composition courses, with the WAC model reserved for advanced courses. At the elementary and secondary levels, if writing is taught as a process at all, it is taught, again, as personal or creative writing. As a result, many students are not introduced to analytical writing until after their freshman college composition course.

Issues

With the separation of the teaching of writing from the teaching of subject areas until the junior or senior year of college, writing has become increasingly isolated rather than increasingly integrated. (Of course, courses throughout the curriculum use writing to measure achievement, for example in research papers or essay exams; however, these courses do not teach writing and use writing only as a product.) Expressive and, to a lesser degree, cognitive theories have, in the very process of emphasizing the writer's ideas, neglected the larger and complex issue of context, of the hypothetical audience extending beyond the student/teacher. In response to this neglect, and amid some controversy, a few college composition directors have, over the last five years, called for the re-integration of writing with the subject areas throughout students' education.

Twenty years ago, Paulo Friere articulated the necessity of critical thinking skills to free and informed choices (1970). Yet college teachers lament their students' inability to think critically, thus indicating where the prevailing process models have failed. The five problem areas cited most often by faculty at the College of William and Mary are representative: 1) students cannot analyze texts; 2) students are unable to draw their own conclusions from secondary research or to discriminate between useful and non-useful sources; 3) students cannot recognize assumptions or produce appropriate evidence; 4) students are unable to write fluently, to work through a writer's block or a conceptual problem; and 5) students do not write correctly. While this last point usually means that students make mechanical errors, the specific problems cited--undeveloped paragraphs, turgid writing styles, even punctuation errors--are problems of content and analysis, broadly conceived. Students are unfamiliar with logical patterns of academic thought, which operate at the level of the sentence as strongly as they do at the level of the thesis.

The inability to analyze, to interpret research, and to identify assumptions result from lack of practice: personal writing does not require students to grapple with someone else's ideas, to test assumptions (their own or the writer's), to take apart an argument and put it back together. The lack of fluency, too, suggests their unfamiliarity with the elaborate note-taking and revision that sophisticated writers use when struggling with another's ideas. The failure to produce appropriate evidence, to cite useful sources, or to write "correctly" are problems of reaching out to unknown readers (i.e., of context): of knowing what readers will need explained, what they will accept as proof, what they will assume about the writer based on the form of the writing. These problems can best be solved by students' sustained exposure to subjects areas as written discourse.

Solutions

Integrating writing horizontally and vertically in the curriculum raises potential problems the process model hoped to solve: providing adequate class time for both writing and content without increasing the workload of already overburdened teachers. However, this false dilemma assumes that what students learn is equivalent to what teachers say, and that teachers have to read everything their students write. The notion that more writing means more work is to some degree a holdover from the product model: there, the teacher's task was to evaluate the students' mastery of both "form" and "content," under the mistaken assumption that the more the teacher wrote on the essay, the more students would learn from the experience (Hairston, 1986). True pedagogical change thus demands a rethinking of the implied dichotomy of "writing" vs. "subject area," a consequent revision of traditional classroom activities, and a reevaluation of the way instructors comment on and evaluate student writing.

Ideally, the horizontal and vertical integration of writing in the teaching of subject areas would raise students' awareness of the subject area as an evolving discourse: that is, a given method of thinking, speaking, and writing about its subject matter. That discourse is dynamic: it has rules, but those are open to change; it has a given subject matter, but that is continually expanding or contracting. And all changes in the discourse are effected through comprehensive language activities: through analysis, debate, definition, discovery, etc. (Berthoff, 1990; Cooper, 1986; LeFevre, 1987). Only through an intimate familiarity with the important writings of a subject area can students come to understand how a discipline takes form and how it can be changed. Such an understanding is crucial to an truly multi-cultural education, because what counts as "knowledge" changes from culture to culture.

Combining the WAC and process models--and, further, integrating all of the "comprehensive language activities" into the teaching of content--can actually decrease time instructors spend on certain activities. They will prepare many fewer lectures; and, because students' writing tends to improve overall (they are not beginning assignments at the last minute), there tend to be fewer mechanical problems. Even more importantly, teaching with writing increases students' competence in subject matter, their long-term retention, and their ability to manipulate the knowledge-base of the discipline (Fulwiler, 1987).

The successive stages of the process--invention/ discovery, organization, composition, revision, editing--are easily applied to teaching with writing in the subject areas:

> Invention/discovery: Instructors can use writing at this stage in two related ways. First, daily writing assignments increase learning (Fulwiler, 1987), even if those assignments are never graded, commented on, or even collected. For example, each day the instructor might assign a different student to record the crucial points of a day's discussion; students might keep double-entry-learning logs in which they take discussion notes in one column, and summarize or raise questions about those notes in a second column (legal-rule paper is particularly useful here); they might work in

problem-solving groups or read-arounds in which they develop group responses (Schenk, 1986; Nystrand, 1987). Such assignments are most successful when instructors treat them as informal writing--that is, when instructors do not evaluate papers based on concerns of form--although students can profit from constructive comments about repeated difficulties. If instructors wish to introduce formal in-class writing, they might ask students to write microthemes--short essays written on 5 x 8 index cards that help students to articulate important concepts (e.g., definitions) in a concise and exact form--or response papers--1-2 page pieces exploring a particular question or further developing a point that came up in class.

Instructors can use these invention/discovery exercises to generate ideas for papers; in addition, they can teach freewriting (Elbow, 1973) and brainstorming as ways of developing theses. Equally important, instructors can build from or adapt informal exercises to help students learn strategies for taking notes on the texts they will write about and research methods appropriate to the discipline. The double-entry learning log, for example, can be used to teach note-taking: instructors might ask students to write down quotations in one column (from either primary or secondary sources, depending on the assignment), and then to write their own questions or analyses in the margins. Or instructors might require a summary of either primary or secondary texts; they might then ask students to develop questions about the summary that would lead to analysis (this exercise not only improves students' grasp of the content, but also teaches the crucial distinction between summary and analysis).

Organization: One of the best ways to teach organization is to ask students to outline a text they will write about, then to answer questions about the organization (e.g., what did the writer have to explain in the second paragraph before we could understand the third?) Students might work in groups to outline the primary text, then discuss how a different organization would change the text; they might also work in writing groups to develop and revise their own outlines based on feedback from their peers.

Composition: This stage is the most individualized, the stage in which the student actually fleshes out the planned paper. Even at this stage, however, group work can prove useful: students might compose one essay together, keeping track of when and why they have to return to an earlier stage of the writing process. Students should be made especially aware during the composition and revision stages that they will need to return repeatedly to their primary and/or secondary sources in order to qualify interpretations or supply more evidence.

Revision: Students, even at the college level, can seldom articulate the difference between revising and editing (Sommers, 1980). Instructors need to explain and, where possible, demonstrate that difference, as well as the importance of moving from large -scale to small-scale concerns (Sommers, 1982). Writing groups are particularly useful at this stage (see Lunsford, 1986), because they provide individual writers an audience that will have questions, need clarifications, and raise arguments. Group tasks should be clearly defined: helping the writer develop and qualify arguments, e.g., or working specifically on revising for emphasis at the sentence level. This stage is the most logical for discussions of paragraphing and style; instructors can show how the topic sentence of a paragraph, or the main idea of a sentence, is analogous to the thesis in an essay (Lanham, 1987; Crews, 1987). In order to address students' particular needs, instructors might also organize indivuidual conferences during class time, while other students compose or work in groups (for keys to successful conferences, see Beach, 1986; Harris, 1986).

Editing: Students should learn that although this is the last stage of their writing process, it is frequently the first thing a reader will notice: editing is like dressing for dinner. Instructors should realize that students may find the task of editing overwhelming, given the handbooks full of apparently arbitrary rules about modifiers, commas, etc. (and indeed, instructors should admit that many rules are simply conventional, and admit that professional writers use handbooks and style sheets, rather than memorizing these rules). Editing groups might read for specific problems, and, where possible, articulate the logic behind certain rules. Instructors should be careful to approach usage and punctuation as logically as possible. For example, commas make sense once the student understands the relationship between the main idea (often the independent clause) and subordinate elements; until the student understands that relationship, teaching comma placement will be frustrating and largely futile. Also, instructors should focus on patterns of error and causes of error rather than on rules or simple correction (Shaughnessy, 1977; Hartwell, 1985; Harris and Rowan, 1989). In all cases, instructors should subordinate mechanical concerns to those of content.

As teachers rethink what students do in class, they should also rethink the ways they assign, comment on, and evaluate their students' writing. They should clearly articulate the tasks students must complete, the purpose of the assignment, the relationship of the assignment to the content and/or method under discussion, and their criteria for evaluation (Larson, 1986). Students should submit at least one draft for the instructor to comment on and return for revision; instructors' comments should focus the student's ideas: where does the student need to expand, qualify, return to sources? As much as possible, comments on formal matters should relate mechanical or stylistic problems to the logic of the essay. For example, the sentence "it is clear that if you read carefully words are used by Hemingway in an interesting way" seems to indicate a stylistic problem. Actually, this student has nothing yet to say--when s/he finds an idea, the stylistic problems should clear up. Studies on effective comments and evaluation (Sommers, 1982; Hairston, 1986; Anson, 1989) suggest that fewer, carefully selected comments, coupled with increased attention to the student's specific location in the writing process (North, 1982), are much more effective than the massive, time-consuming corrections which characterize essays graded under the product model.

Finally, portfolio analysis (Faigley, et. al., 1985; Belanoff and Elbow, 1986; Burnham, 1986) can reinforce the importance of revision and lend instructors' comments more relevance. Portfolios may be submitted at specified points during the semester, and always at the end. If an instructor assigns 20 informal exercises and 5 formal papers during a semester, for example, s/he might require that the final portfolio contain three of the formal papers, revised once more, and 5 of the student's best informal writings, also revised to formal. None of the student's writing would have been graded to this point; however, the instructor would have commented on all of the formal assignments assuming they would be revised for the portfolio. Thus, students would receive grades only on the work submitted in the portfolio, or on the portfolio plus objective tests. The portfolio thus teaches students that writing is an ongoing process; it prevents students from submitting papers written at the last minute; and it gradually increases the student's while decreasing the teacher's participation in the revision process.

Conclusion

A "state of the art" writing pedagogy will help students to understand and manipulate the context in which they write--that is, their extended audience and larger purpose--by integrating writing with the teaching of content areas throughout the curriculum, and from K through college. Such integration will increase learning in the classroom as it helps students develop critical thinking skills. Practically, implementing a curriculum that teaches-with writing will require rethinking the best uses of both classroom and instructor time; and real change will occur only when writing is regarded as but one of the integrally related comprehensive language activities crucial to education in all subject areas.

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Issues in Contemporary Oral Communication Instruction

by
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Oral communication is frequently misunderstood as consisting only of the production and sending of verbal messages. This narrow conception stands in sharp contrast to contemporary theories, most notably symbolic interactionism, which hold that human communication is characterized by the sharing of meaning through the use of symbols such as language, pictures, or other forms of non-verbal expression (Dance, 1970; Littlejohn, 1992). It is the context of its communication events--such as interpersonal conversation, a public speech, or small group decision making--which renders oral communication distinct from other forms of human communication such as writing.

This paper will survey contemporary approaches to oral communication and will highlight issues which have become the focus of recent research and theory. A working definition of oral communication will be followed by a review of pedagogical implications and suggestions for adaptation of concept and skill instruction, to gifted elementary and middle school students.

I. A Working Definition of Oral Communication Competency

Today, theorists view oral communication as a two-way process which involves, in its most basic sense, the elements of Sender, Message, Channel, and Receiver; and in more elaborate models, the additional elements of Feedback, Interference, and Context are included. The SMCR model has significant implications for the instruction of oral communication in that it broadens the range of skills considered central to oral communication to include speaking, listening, non-verbal communication, and cognitive "critical thinking" skills necessary to form, defend, and evaluate arguments (Samover & Mills, 1986; Casagrande & Casagrande, 1989; Sprague & Stuart, 1992; Lucas, 1992).

Most significantly, this interpretation of oral communication as process emphasizes the development of cognitive skills inherent in the act of informing and persuading. A number of oral communication contexts require instruction in critical thinking skills, including argumentation and debate, persuasion (both in public speaking and in interpersonal communication), critical reception of persuasive messages (listening), and participation in group problem-solving. Because of the specific demands of each context, and because modern society is becoming heavily reliant upon mass media channels to convey oral messages, critical thinking skills are receiving increased attention in oral communication instruction.

In an attempt to encapsulate the core attributes of oral communication into the most efficient format for instruction, most colleges and universities have opted for a "basic course", which has become the primary mechanism for introducing undergraduate students from a wide variety of elementary and secondary programs to the standardized teaching of oral communication. Basic courses generally include units on listening, instruction in basic organization and research methods, ethics, informative and persuasive speaking, audience adaptation, delivery, and small group dynamics (Verderber, 1991; Osborn & Osborn, 1992; Makay,1992).

However, the recent national trend in higher education toward competency-based instruction and assessment has served as a catalyst in efforts to determine the core competencies of oral communication (Aitken & Neer, 1991; Morreale, Morley, & Naylor,1991; Hay, 1992; Goulden, 1992). While there remains some disagreement over the inclusion or exclusion of skills such as gender and intercultural sensitivity in language usage, there does exist a set of skills which are universally agreed upon as central to oral communication and which are most likely to provide a comprehensive working definition of oral communication. Table 1 comprises a list of competencies suggested by a 1985 Speech Communication Association survey of 1200 junior and community college deans and speech faculty as skills which should be demonstrated by college sophomores. This particular grouping of skills is the basis for many of the currently implemented assessment programs at junior as well as four-year colleges and universities (Speech Communication Association, 1985).

Table 1: Competencies for College Sophomores

Speaking Competencies	**Listening Competencies**
Determining the purpose of the oral discourse Choosing a topic and restricting it according to the purpose and the audience Fulfilling the purpose by: • formulating a thesis statement • providing adequate supporting material • selecting a suitable organizational pattern • demonstrating careful choice of words • providing effective transitions • demonstrating suitable interpersonal skills Employing vocal variety in rate, pitch, and intensity Articulating clearly Employing the level of American English appropriate to the designated audience Demonstrating nonverbal behavior which supports the verbal message	Listening with literal comprehension: • Recognizing main ideas • Identifying supporting materials • Recognizing explicit relationships among ideas • Recalling basic ideas and detail Listening with critical comprehension: • Attending with an open mind • Perceiving the speaker's purpose and organization of ideas and information • Discriminating between statements of fact and statements of opinion • Distinguishing between emotional and logical arguments • Detecting bias and prejudice • Recognizing the speaker's attitude • Synthesizing and evaluating by drawing logical inferences and conclusions • Recalling the implications and arguments • Recognizing discrepancies between speaker's verbal and nonverbal messages • Employing active listening techniques when appropriate

B. yond Core Competencies: Additional Considerations

Beyond issues of core competency, a symbolic interactionism interpretation of oral communication as the sharing of meaning through symbols (both verbal and non-verbal) has led to the expansion of instruction in areas such as gender-based language usage and intercultural communication. Gender-related communication scholarship is extensive. Concerns most directly oriented toward the classroom include enhancing gender sensitivity in speech (Wood & Lenze, 1991); developing a gender-balanced curriculum in the basic course (Peterson 1991); and creating an awareness of diversity (Mollenkott, 1991).

Intercultural communication is perhaps the most recent issue of concern for oral communication instruction. Current pedagogy emphasizes the appreciation of diversity and negative impact of ethnocentrism, factors accounting for the importance of intercultural communication, general principles of intercultural communication, and barriers to intercultural communication (Devito, 1991; Bello-Ognunu, 1991).

Additionally, there are several oral communication contexts which are not always taught as components of a "basic course" but which demonstrate key clusters of oral communication skills. These contexts include the oral interpretation of literature; rhetorical criticism; the production of radio and television programs; the development of humorous or primarily entertaining speech forms (such as the after-dinner speech); and variations of debate events such as parliamentary debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate (one-on-one), and cross-examination policy or value debate (two-person teams). Several of these contexts are explored in high school and collegiate forensics, in combination with the traditional public speaking events of informative and persuasive original oratory (8-10 minute memorized speeches, delivered without a podium), extemporaneous speeches (3-5 minutes with limited preparation on a current event topic), and impromptu speeches (3-5 minutes with 1 minute preparation, usually on popular quotations or thought-provoking questions).

The usefulness of these various forensic activities lies primarily in their ability to serve as vehicles for the development of organizational and critical thinking skills which are accessed by the student at a moment's notice, as is generally more necessary for oral communication contexts than for written communication contexts. Additionally, practice and numerous opportunities for performance allow students to monitor the involvement of physical and vocal delivery skills.

II. Implications for Pedagogy

Competency-based instruction need not be remedial, boring to the student and teacher, or unchallenging. However, as oral communication comprises a set of core skills, instruction should aim to achieve at a minimum, the following goals.

1. Students Should Be Trained, Active Listeners

A major listening text bemoans the fact that listening has become an "orphan of education" (Wolff, et. al., 1983):

At least 75% of our daily communication is oral and requires us to be articulate speakers and efficient listeners. How well have we been prepared to operate in a highly technological oral communication world? Elementary school teachers have tried to develop an informal approach to oral communication in teaching language arts, but without uniformly designed speech and listening units within the curriculum. The typical high school usually offers one elective speech course with minimal or no emphasis on listening theory and skills.

Listening should be taught as an active, rather than a passive, process requiring training and skill development. Listening skills correspond to various types of oral communication contexts and this correspondence should be differentiated for students. Listening types may be categorized in several different ways, as in Table 1 which contrasts literal with critical listening; an alternative approach is suggested in Table 2 which categorizes skills according to function.

Table 2: Two Types of Listening by Function

Discriminative Listening: Listening to instructive or informative oral communication.

Goals: To gather information to understand the material, to learn something from it so that it will be useful.

Strategies:
1. Concentrate on the main ideas in the message.
2. Concentrate on the speaker's pattern or organization.
3. Be aware of feedback to the speaker. (Am I giving the speaker eye contact? Am I communicating that I am interested in the message?)
4. Consciously formulate questions.

Evaluative Listening: Listening to persuasive oral communication

Goals: To participate in the two-way process of persuasion in a responsible manner by learning to evaluate the merits of a persuasive message.

Strategies:
1. Learn to choose immediate or delayed appraisal.
2. Increase specific knowledge in areas of potential persuasion (i.e., read CONSUMER REPORTS before buying a car).
3. Learn to identify commonly used fallacies and propaganda techniques.
4. Learn to recognize positive or negative changes in personal beliefs or attitudes as a response to persuasion.

Source: Florence, I. et al. (1981). *Perceptive Listening.* NY: Random House.

2. Students Should Understand The Unique Demands of Speech Organization and Preparation

An area which is not emphasized enough in oral communication instruction is discussion of the basic differences between oral and written communication which may directly impact the effectiveness of an oral presentation, whether formal or informal. It is simply not true that all speech texts are equally suited for delivery; nor is it true that good essay writers will automatically write good speeches without additional training from an oral communication perspective. The major reason for additional training in organizing and preparing speeches--and the principles are the same for public speeches, debates press conferences, and even interviews--is that unlike the writer, the oral communicator is sending a message to an audience which is listening to the message as opposed to reading the message. Even as active listeners, audience members are more likely to retain the speaker's information only with the aid of exceptional clarity on the part of the speaker. The possibilities of cross-examination by an audience member or immediate refutation by a debate opponent are further justifications for speaker clarity, accuracy and adequacy in supporting materials, ethical approach, and choice of language appropriate for the audience. At any level of instruction concerning the oral presentation and/or defense of ideas, the skills of determination of topic and purpose, outlining, and organization must be emphasized. The topic/purpose model below is helpful in teaching students to thoroughly develop the nucleus of directional information needed to complete the speech outline:

1. Selection of Appropriate Topic: The student learns to select a topic and then to narrow it or broaden it if necessary, according to time constraints or audience expectations. Students are encouraged to pick a topic area which is interesting to them personally, and are instructed in various brainstorming techniques should they have a difficult time finding inspiration.

2. Determination of General Purpose: General purpose refers to the act of informing, persuading, entertaining, or inspiring, and is always expressed as an infinitive. Students are asked to decide whether their general purpose is "to persuade" or "to inform" etc., after instruction on the implications of each type of purpose. Students learn, for instance, that the goal of a persuasive speech is to change or reinforce the audience's attitudes, beliefs, or actions with respect to the topic; while the goal of an informative speech is to increase the audience's understanding of a topic without attempting to change the audience in any respect.

3. Determination of Specific Purpose: Specific purpose refers to the individual goals the student hopes to achieve through the presentation. The specific purpose can always be articulated in a complete sentence, e.g., "My specific purpose is to inform the audience about basic first aid techniques," or, "My specific purpose is to persuade the audience to consume less fat and cholesterol in their daily diet."

4. Development of Thesis Statement: Once the specific purpose has been determined, the student constructs a simple thesis statement which should be concise, but should include the main points of the message, e.g., "Three basic first aid techniques to learn are direct pressure to stop blood flow from an open wound, elevation of bleeding extremities to slow blood loss, and how to stop bleeding through use of a tourniquet," or "We should significantly reduce the amount of fat and cholesterol in our daily diets to reduce and maintain a healthy body weight, to reduce our risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, and to improve overall nutrition."

Following composition of the thesis statement is the actual speech outline, which is similar to the outline for a written presentation, except that oral communicators must utilize clear, specially developed transitions in each movement from main point to main point (examples below are from Lucas, 1992 pp. 164-65). It is a practice which is necessary in oral presentations but less so in written communication, when the audience has the advantage of a written text.

Internal Preview: Now that we have seen how serious America's garbage problem is, let's look at some solutions. I will focus on three solutions in particular -- reducing our wasteful use of resources; instituting mandatory recycling programs; and developing alternative methods of disposing of our garbage. Let's look at each in turn.

Internal Summary: Let's pause for a moment to recapitulate what we have found so far. First, we have seen that America's criminal justice system does not effectively deter crime. Second, we have seen that prison programs to rehabilitate criminals have failed miserably. We are now ready to explore solutions to these problems.

Signposts: Be sure to keep this in mind. . .
The most important thing to remember. . .
Let me repeat that last statement. . .
How can we solve this problem?
The first cause of this is. . .
The second cause is. . .
The third cause is. . .
Finally, . . .

Additionally, preparation of a speech text begins with a very detailed, complete sentence outline, which is then condensed into what is known as a "speaker's outline": less detailed, containing "cues" for effective delivery such as "slow down," "watch eye contact!" or "emphasize," and is usually written on note cards to allow for a more conversational and dynamic delivery.

Some students may assume that outlining the presentation is frivolous, but even undergraduate speech students have difficulty at times demonstrating a firm grasp of the following critical skills without instruction:

1. Formulating significant, mutually exclusive and logically related main points.
2. Ordering the main points in an effective, appropriate sequence for facilitating audience understanding and retention (examples include chronological, spatial, topical sequence, problem-solution, cause-effect).
3. Correctly identifying differences between main points, sub-points, and sub-sub points.
4. Recognizing and utilizing adequate supporting material.
5. Structuring arguments clearly and concisely within the body of a (persuasive) speech.

3. Students Should Adapt to the Audience

Audience adaptation consists of a combination of demographic analysis and situational analysis. Demographic audience analysis, which may involve interviews or questionnaires, offers insight into the values, beliefs, attitudes, and general knowledge of the audience with respect to the topic. Good demographic analysis is important, not only to avoid offending audience members with stereotypical assertions, but also in maximizing efforts to build rapport with the audience or to enhance persuasion .

Situational audience analysis is the consideration by the speaker of physical or temporal elements which may affect the presentation, such as the temperature of the speech area, the time of day, the occasion of the speech, or number of people present in the audience. These types of considerations generally have more of an effect on the length of the presentation and the style (formal vs. informal; manuscript vs. extemporaneous) of delivery more than the content of the speech itself.

4. Students Should Develop A Strong and Credible Delivery

Oral presentations may be delivered in several different ways: from manuscript (best for highly formal occasions); extemporaneously (from outline with some preparation and practice; best for situations in which the speaker wants to feel at ease with the audience and wants to maximize eye contact); and impromptu (virtually no preparation). Regardless of choice of delivery style, good physical delivery includes direct, sustained, and varied eye contact (as opposed to looking between or over the heads of audience members); meaningful, varied hand and arm gestures; appropriate facial expressions; good posture; and absence of distracting nervous mannerisms, such as playing with hair and clothing, shifting weight from leg to leg, or leaning over or gripping a podium. Good vocal delivery includes the ability to project to the back of the audience; vocal variety in pitch, volume, and tone; the absence of vocalized pauses such as "uh," "um," "like," "okay," and "y'know"; skillful use of dramatic pauses; an appropriate rate of speed in speaking, and clear articulation.

5. Students Should Construct Sound and Ethical Arguments

The issue of ethics is often neglected or assumed to be self-evident in oral communication instruction, but this practice is detrimental when one considers the vast number of people who fall prey to unethical persuaders everyday (Pratkanis & Aronson 1991; Johannesen, 1990). Just as plagiarism rules are strictly enforced in writing, similar rules should be taught and enforced in speaking. Students should learn to cite their sources in the speech; to use information in its proper context; never to create facts or statistics in an effort to persuade (no matter how "good" intentions may be--even Ronald Reagan was severely criticized for this practice!); and to avoid other types of ethical violations such as omission of potentially significant contrary information, overgeneralizations or overclaiming of evidence, and exaggeration of a source's credentials. The pressures on a speaker to be credible and to achieve personal goals of persuasion, especially when strongly held beliefs are involved, should not be underestimated.

Students can satisfy their desire to be effective persuaders and debaters by mastering the development of "proof" and by learning how to identify the best evidence and reasoning. Instruction in oral communication should include exploration of basic reasoning patterns such as deductive, inductive, causal, and analogical reasoning.

The imperative for learning strong analysis and reasoning skills moves far beyond formal public speaking or debate participation and into the context of everyday public and interpersonal discourse (Cooper, 1989; Cooper & Nothstine, 1992). Oral communicators participate in daily activities such as buying and selling, reaching compromise or consensus, and making personal decisions which all depend upon the ability to construct or evaluate persuasive messages. Relevant skills include the ability to differentiate strong from weak evidence; learning to recognize and use, as appropriate, emotional appeals and value appeals; and learning to recognize strong or fallacious patterns in reasoning. The Toulmin Analytic Model of argument (Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1979) can be adapted to help students understand the basic components of an argument (see Table 3) and there are several sources for information about evidence. One of the best is excerpted in Table 4.

Table 3: Toulmin's Model of Argument (Simplified)

(G)rounds/Data/Evidence: The information on which the argument rests.
(W)arrant: The chain of reasoning or underlying logical assumptions made by the speaker.
(C)laim/Conclusion: The statement the speaker is attempting to prove.

Examples:

(C):	It will be clearer and cooler by the morning.
(W):	In these latitudes, passage of a cold front is normally followed after a few hours by clearing, cooler weather.
(G):	This evening the wind has veered from SW to NW; the rain has nearly stopped; there are local breaks in the clouds, all signs indicating the passage of a cold front.
(C):	The Redskins will repeat as Super Bowl champs.
(W):	Only a team that is really strong in both offense and defense can win consecutive Super Bowls.
(G):	The Washington Redskins have the strongest and best-balanced offensive squads of any NFL team, while their major rivals are weak in one squad or another.

Examples adapted or as printed in Toulmin, S., Rieke, R., and Janik, A. (1979). An introduction to reasoning. NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., 87-88.

Table 4: Indices of Credibility for Evidence

SITUATIONAL TESTS

1. Tension: The lower the tension associated with an event, the higher the credibility of reports about it.
2. Accessibility: The more accessible the situation being reported on, both to the reporters and their audience, the more credible their reports.
3. Freedom to Report: Absence of a gag rule. The more freedom a witness has to report things as he/she sees them, the greater the credibility.

DOCUMENTARY TESTS

1. Authenticity: The greater the presumption of authenticity, the higher the credibility of a document.
2. Internal Consistency: The higher the internal consistency of an author, the more credible the testimony.
3. Carefulness of Generalization: The more careful the generalizations of a writer, the higher the credibility of the testimony.
4. Reluctance: The greater the damage of his/her own testimony to a witness, the more credible it is.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AUTHOR

1. Expertise: The greater the relevant expertise of an author, the higher the credibility.
2. Objectivity: The greater the objectivity of an author, the more credible the testimony.
3. Accuracy Record: The more accurate the description and prediction record of a source, the higher the credibility of any general testimony.

TESTS OF PRIMARY AUTHORITIES

1. Eyewitness Principle: The greater a witness' personal observation of a matter to which they testify, the greater the credibility of the testimony.
2. Contemporaneity: The more contemporaneous the report of a witness, the more credible the testimony.

TESTS OF SECONDARY SOURCES

1. Selection of Primary Sources: The more discerning a writer's selection of primary sources, the more credible the testimony.
2. Accuracy of Citation: The more accurate the citations of a writer, the more credible the testimony.

Source: Newman, R. and Newman, D. (1969). New York: Houghton Miflin Co., 74-87.

III. Suggestions for Adaptation

The following suggested exercises may be easily adapted at the instructor's discretion to the age group, skill, and maturity level of the student group.

The exercises presented here were selected on the basis of interest-keeping ability, practicality, and efficiency in developing the communication skills which are helpful in a variety of oral communication contexts. Most of the following exercises are also characterized by their emphasis on critical thinking skills within an oral communication context, and some are also helpful in integrating speaking and writing.

Listening

1. Assign a Listening Essay: Students attend an oral presentation with the teacher or watch one selected by the teacher on videotape. Students write an essay about their reaction to the speaker, focusing on issues selected by the teacher, such as:

> What were some of the main points mentioned by the speaker?
> What sources of information did the speaker draw upon during the speech?
> What were some of the arguments made by the speaker? Did you find the arguments strong or weak? Why or why not?
> How do you think other people in the audience reacted to the speaker? What kind of audience feedback led you to draw this conclusion?

SKILLS: This exercise builds both discriminative and evaluative (critical thinking) listening skills.

2. Prepare a videotape of television commercials which are notable for their use of fallacies in reasoning or specific persuasive strategies such as doublespeak, confusion, or deceptive claims. Challenge students to look for flaws in the reasoning process as they view and listen to the commercials. Discuss each commercial as a class.

Organizing and Preparing the Oral Presentation

1. Impromptu Speeches: After instruction of the Topic/Purpose Model, distribute two or three notecards per student. Students will draw a quotation, word, or phrase from a hat. Tell them that they have five minutes to prepare a two or three point speech about or related to the item, using the following steps of the topic/purpose model. After students have formulated the thesis statement (step 4), each main point can be slightly developed. Students deliver the speech from the bare outline on their cards. Older, more advanced students should be instructed to build a persuasive speech.

Hints: Encourage humor and creativity. Adapt preparation time and difficulty of topic items to skill level of the group. Students may initially believe they are incapable of thinking so quickly, but it is important that the instructor resist lengthening the preparation time and encourages students to present whatever they have prepared, even when time is up. Remind students that everyone is in the same boat--and that it will become easier to do this after the first couple of tries.

This exercise is most effective when the rules are kept simple and when each student has had a chance to perform three or more times. A variation on this exercise which may be more suitable for younger children: prepare a box of toys or interesting objects (which may or may not be immediately recognizable to the students) and allow each student to select an object. Instruct them to spend a few minutes imagining what the object is (if it is not easily recognizable) and what it might be useful for, and then based on these thoughts, have them inform the class about the object as they have conceived of it, or ask them to persuade the persuade the class to buy the object.

SKILLS: Builds organizational skills, clarity of thought, quickness of thought, creativity in thought, reasoning, and self-confidence. Basic delivery.

2. Extemporaneous Speaking: Instruct students to read the newspapers or magazines one evening and to select a current event issue that interests them. Students need to concentrate on an issue that has pro and con aspects. Ask students to prepare a 3-7 minute speech expressing their point of view on the issue, using the information they have collected from the articles, from personal experience, or interviews with other people.

Hints: The nature of the topic is very important--some issues are much more complex or too subtle for this particular exercise, since it involves limited preparation. Students should "clear" topic and choice of interpretation of topic with instructor to make sure it is feasible. Additionally, like the impromptu speech, this should not be a memorized or manuscript speech. Delivery should be from an outline. This type of delivery is more challenging and teaches students to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts as they come to them, at the moment, in an organized and clear matter.

SKILLS: Critical thinking--selection and use of evidence, reasoning, organization. Basic delivery.

Audience Adaptation

1. Adapting to the class: Ask students to deliver speech assignments deliberately tailored to their own classmates. To accomplish this goal, it may be worth while to teach students how to put together and administer surveys or interviews about their topic to their classmates, a few days before the speech is to be presented.

2: Showing students a videotaped example of a speaker who obviously adapts well to the audience, and a tape of one who does not, is an excellent vehicle for prompting discussion.

Developing a Strong and Credible Delivery

1. Practice: The single best tool for building delivery skills is actual speaking practice. Impromptu, extemporaneous, and prepared speeches all build these skills, but frequent attempts to speak before an audience, combined with thorough and sensitive feedback from the instructor, are most important to the beginning speaker.

2. Videotaping: Self-awareness of physical and vocal delivery can be increased by videotaping a student's speech and discussing the speech with them as they watch it.

3. Oral Interpretation of Literature: Students select a piece of prose or poetry, and with guidance from the teacher, edit the piece so that it is suitable for performance and within the teacher's suggested time limits. Student practices the piece and performs it for the class. Pieces with multiple characters tend to be more challenging, but not necessarily more helpful in building skills, since character dialogue is apt to be fragmented once the piece is cut, and character profiles may be harder to develop.

SKILLS: Comprehension of the literature, creativity in interpretation of the text, vocal delivery.

Constructing Ethical and Sound Arguments

1. Persuasive Speaking: Any type of persuasive speaking assignment is useful for this, even the impromptu exercise. The very act of persuading--attempting to change or reinforce audience attitudes, beliefs, values, or actions--necessitates the construction and implies the defense of arguments.

2. Evidence and Reasoning Analysis: Instruct students to spend some time looking through magazines for advertisements that make extreme claims about their products. Ask students to take apart the arguments in the advertisement using the Toulmin model and make a short oral presentation on their findings.
FOR MORE ADVANCED STUDENTS: distribute examples of highly-charged political tracts, campaign literature, sales propaganda (such as direct mail), or other intensive persuasive material, and ask them to identify and analyze arguments using the Toulmin model. Ask them to identify sources of bias in testimony, statistics, or use of examples.

3. Debates: Any form of debate is helpful in building argumentation skills. Consult a debate text for the various types of formats and rules which are most suitable for the age group and skill level of the class.

Possible Areas for Exploration

It has long been assumed that oral communication abilities were invariably restricted by the forces of childhood development. However, recent research suggests that the level of sophistication of children's oral communication can be increased much earlier than was previously thought, with special instruction. Two areas of particular interest are the use of analytic skills in informative communication (Clinton, 1992) and the development of alternative compromising and persuading strategies (Clark, Willinghanz, & O'Dell, 1985). Most of the above exercises could be adapted and simplified for these younger age groups, although the use of role playing in persuasive communication contexts between students might be particularly helpful.

Summary

Oral communication is best conceptualized as a two-way process involving both the senders and receivers of messages. In this respect oral communication necessitates many of the same fundamental communication skills that are taught in writing; in particular, the organizational and cognitive "critical thinking" skills which are involved in the sharing of meaning. For the oral communicator, messages composed of both verbal and non-verbal symbols are constructed and evaluated through the use of critical thinking skills, and are delivered most effectively through the development and practice of vocal and physical delivery skills. The oral communicator adapts to an audience which may respond immediately with feedback, may cross-examine or raise objections to the speaker's message, and depends on a combination of active listening skills and speaker clarity to accurately comprehend the oral message.

The most recent and significant developments in oral communication research and theory focus on competency-based instruction and assessment, the continued development of ways to address gender in communication, intercultural communication, and in the incorporation of critical thinking skills into an oral communication curriculum which increasingly must prepare its students for participation in a society dominated by messages conveyed through the mass media.

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The Concept of Change: Interdisciplinary Meaning and Inquiry

by
Linda Neal Boyce

What Is Change?

Change is a complex interdisciplinary concept that inspires fear as well as hope. The idea of change has engaged thinkers throughout the ages and across disciplines. Because change transcends the disciplines, an understanding of change in one discipline informs the study of change in another discipline and results in important connections. Likewise, an interdisciplinary study of change provides insights into the structure of the each discipline. Furthermore, the increasing rate of global change that encompasses social, political, and environmental upheaval, an information explosion, and a technological revolution creates an urgent need for the understanding of the dynamics of change. This paper explores the concept of change in several disciplines, identifies key resources that focus on change, and examines the way the concept of change has been applied in the National Language Arts Project for High Ability Learners.

Religion and Philosophy

The *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Capek, 1967) and *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Hyslop, 1910) provide overviews of change from the perspectives of religion and philosophy. Both sources agree that change is one of the most basic and pervasive features of our experience. Hyslop goes so far as to say that change is difficult to define and that it is easier to discuss the types of change. He identifies four types of change: (1) qualitative change, a change in the qualities or properties of a subject such as chemical reaction; (2) quantitative change which includes expansion, contraction, detrition, and accretion; (3) local change, or a change in the subject's position in space; and (4) formal change, a change of shape. He adds that all changes involve time which is an essential condition of change.

Historically, philosophers and theologians have not always acknowledged the existence of change (Capek, 1967 & Hyslop, 1910). Ideas of God, Being, and One that are based on eternal order and perfection of nature regard time and change as illusions of finite experience. Hyslop points out that the recognition of change is crucial to inquiry; that change represents the dynamic as the source of all investigations into causes. He states, "Curiosity regarding causal agency begins with the discovery of change and terminates in explanation" (p. 357). Capek's and Hyslop's essays offer an important backdrop to our understanding of the current controversies, the intense emotion, and the values that surround the concept of change.

Social Studies

In his outline of "Social Studies Within a Global Education," Kniep (1991/1989) identifies change as one of the conceptual themes for social studies and asserts, "The process of movement from one state of being to another is a universal aspect of the planet and is an inevitable part of life and living." (p. 121) He lists adaption, cause and effect, development, evolution, growth, revolution, and time as related concepts. Kniep's comprehensive scope and sequence for social studies includes essential elements (systems, human values, persistent issues and problems, and global history), conceptual themes (interdependence, change, culture, scarcity, and conflict), phneomenological themes (people, places, and events), and persistent problem themes (peace and security, national/international development, environmental problems, and human rights). Change is both a concept to understand and an agent to consider in all social studies ideas and themes.

In discussing social change, Daniel Chirot (1985) views social change as pervasive, believing, however, that most societies delude themselves into believing that stability prevails and that unchanging norms can be a reality.

He identifies demographic change, technological change, and political change as the most important causes of general social change. In his discussion of how and why critical changes have occurred. Chirot considers three transformations in social structure among the most important:

- the technological revolution produced by the adoption of sedentary agriculture
- the organizational revolution that accompanied the rise of states
- the current "modernization" that encompasses major changes in thought, technology, and politics.

He points out that studying current major changes such as the increasing power of the state and the proletarianization of labor helps us understand smaller changes such as those in family structure, local political organizations, types of protest, and work habits. Because change impacts on our lives in large and small ways, we must understand and confront it.

Vogt's (1968) analysis of cultural change echoes Chirot's discussion of social change: "It can now be demonstrated from our accumulated archeological and historical data that a culture is never static, but rather that one of its most fundamental properties is change." (p. 556) Vogt cites three factors that influence change in a given culture:

- Any change in the ecological niche as a result of natural environmental changes or the migration of a society as when the Anasazi Indians left Mesa Verde to find new homes and lost their cultural identity in the process.
- Any contact between two societies with different cultural patterns as when Hispanic and Native American cultures converged in New Mexico.
- Any evolutionary change occurring within a society such as when a food-gathering society domesticates its plants and animals or incorporates technology to effect lifestyle changes.

In his discussion of cultural adaptation, Carneiro (1968) distinguishes between cultural adaptation (the adjustment of a society to its external and internal conditions) and cultural evolution (change by which a society grows complex and better integrated). Adaptation may include simplification and loss resulting from a deteriorating environment. Thus, adaptation may signal negative as well as positive changes for a cultural group.

History--the social sciences discipline that chronicles change-- provides insight into specific changes from a range of perspectives. For instance, resources such as *The Timetables of History* (Grun, 1979) and *The Timetables of American History* (Urdang, 1981) record changes by significant annual events in the areas of history and politics; literature and theater; religion, philosophy, and learning; the visual arts; music; science and technology; and daily life. These tools allow readers to see at a glance the simultaneous events and significant people involved in changes occurring throughout the world or in a specific area.

Individuals interested in how the world has worked chronicle ideas about change on an interdisciplinary canvas. Boorstin (1983) focuses on man's need to know and the courage of those who challenged dogmas at various times in history. He provides an indepth look at the causes of change, considering such questions as why the Chinese did not "discover" Europe and America and why the Egyptians and not the Greeks invented the calendar. Tamplin (1991) demonstrates the interrelationship of personal, cultural, and societal change with discussions and illustrations of literature, visual arts, architecture, music, and the performing arts. Petroski (1992), chronicles change and investigates its origins. He argues that shortcomings are the driving force for change and sees inventors as critics with a compelling urge to tinker with things and to improve them.

Science

Echoing the call for curriculum reform that centers on an indepth study of broad concepts, Rutherford and Ahlgren (1990) in their report *Science for All Americans* state:

> Some important themes pervade science, mathematics, and technology and appear over and over again, whether we are looking at an ancient civilization, the human body, or a comet. They are ideas that transcend disciplinary boundaries and prove fruitful in explanation, in theory, in observation, and in design.

Rutherford and Ahlgren proceed to recommend six themes: systems, models, constancy, patterns of change, evolution, and scale. Of the six themes, three of them--constancy, patterns of change, and evolution--focus on change or its inverse. In discussing patterns of change, Rutherford and Ahlgren identify three general categories, all of which have applicability in other disciplines: (1) changes that are steady trends, (2) changes that occur in cycles, and (3) changes that are irregular.

Sher (1993) identifies and discusses four general patterns of change: (1) steady changes: those that occur at a characteristic rate; (2) cyclic changes: those changes that repeat in cycles; (3) random changes: those changes that occur irregularly, unpredictably, and in a way that is mathematically random; and (4) chaotic change: change that appears random and irregular on the surface, but is in fact or principle predictable. She considers the understanding of chaotic change as one of the most exciting developments in recent science.

As in the other disciplines, change in science can be studied as a concept and as a specific application or type of change. For example, our view of the earth over the last 40 years has changed from a static globe model to a dynamic plate tectonics model, affecting our understanding of earthquakes, volcanoes, and other seismic events (NASA, 1988; 1990).

Language--Creative and Changing

S. I. and Alan Hayakawa in *Language in Thought and Action* (1990) state categorically, "Language...makes progress possible" (p.7). They argue that reading and writing make it possible to pool experience and that "cultrual and intellectual cooperation is, or should be, the great principle of human life" (p. 8). They then examine the relationships among language, thought, and behavior and how language changes thinking and behavior. For instance, they discuss how judgments stop thought which can lead to unfounded and dangerous generalizations.

They explore the changing meanings of words and point out "no word ever has exactly the same meaning twice" (p. 39). For the Hayakawas, dictionaries are not authoritative statements about words but rather historical records of the meanings of words. Finally, the Hayakawas discuss the paralyzing effects of fear of change and the anger that accompanies it. They propose that the debate around issues facing society should center on specific questions such as "What will be the results?" "Who would benefit, and by how much?" and "Who would be harmed, and to what degree?" rather than questions of "right" or "wrong." They contend that this way of thinking reflects a scientific attitude and harnesses language to accurately "map" social and individual problems; thereby enabling change.

While *Language in Thought and Action* is an eloquent manifesto about the possibilities of language, the anthology *Language Awareness* (Eschholz, Rosa, & Clark, 1982) provides a resource on specific topics. The essays cover the history of language; language in politics and propaganda; the language of advertising; media and language; jargon; names; prejudice and language; taboos and euphemisms; language play; and the responsible use of language. Each essay examines either changes in language or how language changes thinking and action. For example, in her outline of the devices of propaganda that include name calling, generalities, "plain folks" appeal, stroking, personal attacks, guilt or glory by association, bandwagon appeals, faulty cause and effect, false analogy, and testimonials, Cross (1982) examines the manipulative power of language.

The powers of language range from strident manipulation to the quiet heightening of awareness. Response to language involves a change--a change of perspective, a new understanding, an insight in the search for meaning. Coles (1989) speaks of the power of literature to give direction to life and to awaken moral sensibilities. He states, "Novels and stories are renderings of life; they can not only keep us company, but admonish us, point us in new directions, or give us the courage to stay a given course." (p.159)

While Coles discusses the impact of literature on private lives, Downs (1978) discusses revolutionary books throughout history in his *Books That Changed the World.* Examining such books as *The Bible,* Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Beecher's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Darwin's *Origin of Species,* and Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* Downs attempts to discover and to analyze two categories of writings: works that were direct, immediate instruments in determining the course of events and works that molded minds over centuries. He concludes that, "Omitting the scientists in the group, for whom these comments are less pertinent, the books printed since 1500 were written by nonconformists, radicals, fanatics, revolutionists, and agitators." (p. 25)

The reading process which enables readers to search for information and meaning and to use books to enrich their lives is an active, recursive process that includes choosing a book, reading, discussing from the reader's point of view, listening to another's point of view, reflecting and responding, and re-reading or making a new choice (Bailey, Boyce, VanTassel-Baska, 1990). Effective reading includes revising an interpretation or changing ideas, a step which is mirrored in the writing process and in speaking and listening. Kennedy (1993) sees all of the language processes--reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking--as complex, interrelated activities; activities that result in a dynamic, changing discourse.

Censorship reflects the public's acknowledgement and fear of the power of language to change thinking, behavior, and society at large. The debate over censorship and freedom of expression has raged for centuries and ranges from the use of racist and sexist language in literature to the effects of violence on television. Plato, one may remember, argued against allowing children to listen to imaginative stories and banned the poets from his ideal society. The continuing controversy regarding the burning of the American flag is one of several censorship issues widely debated in our society that illustrates the linkage of symbols, language, and freedom of expression (Bradbury and Quinn, 1991).

Telecommunications In a Changing World

Telecommunications has dramatically changed our capacity to access information. Electronic mail, known as e-mail, is a telecommunications system that links computers around the world through telephone lines and satellites. Several networks exist such as Internet, CompuServe, Prodigy, and Peacenet. Electronic mail has created significant changes in scientific and business communities such as: increased flexibility for team members working in various locations across time zones, an end to isolation of researchers around the world, and the restructuring of organizations by eliminating corporate hierarchies (Perry, 1992a). Perry also cites the role of e-mail in the Russian coup of Boris Yeltsin and the use of faxes during the Tiananmen uprising. E-mail and fax machines provided sources of information that were difficult to control and allowed dissenters to communicate with one another and with the outside world (Perry, 1992b).

Video, television, cable, compact disks, and computers are transforming not only access to information, but the content of information as well. In a recent *U. S. News and World Report* article John Leo (March 8, 1993) discusses the new standard of television news that blends information and entertainment. He contends that images, story line, and emotional impact are replacing a commitment to evidence, ethics, and truth. In another development, compact discs and computers are combining sound tracks, animation, photography, and print information that replace standard multi-volume encyclopedias and that enable users to combine information in new ways. The new Compton's Encyclopedia on CD-Rom, for example, can organize via a time machine any historical period by key categories of events, such as literature and the arts, science and technology, history and politics, and so on. This changing information technology, brings new requirements for critical evaluation and consideration of how technology can limit or expand thinking.

The Concept of Change and Language Arts Unit Development

For the purposes of teaching the concept of change for this project, five generalizations about change were drawn from the literature of various disciplines. Table 1 illustrates those generalizations and their accompanying outcomes. Examples of how the generalizations were addressed in the units through language study, language processes, and literature follow Table I.

Table 1

Generalizations and Outcomes About Change

Generalizations	Outcomes
1. Change is pervasive	Understand that change permeates our lives and our universe.
2. Change is linked to time	Ilustrate the variability of change. based on time
3. Change may be perceived as systematic or random	Categorize types of change, given several examples Demonstrate the change process at work in a piece of literature.
4. Change may represent growth and development or regression and decay	Interpret change in selected works as progressive or regressive.
5. Change may occur according to natural order or be imposed by individuals or groups	Analyze social and individual change in a given piece of literature.

Language Study

Throughout the units, word study and vocabulary served as a primary source for studying change. Students constructed vocabulary webs that mapped words by: (1) the definition, (2) a sentence that used the word from the literature being studied, (3) an example of the word, (4) an analysis of the word that identified stems (roots, prefixes, and suffixes), word families, and word history. To build on the verbal talent of high ability learners, resources such as *Sumer is Icumen In: Our Ever-Changing Language* by Greenfeld (1978) and *Oxford Guide to Word Games* by Augarde (1984) were included in the units to encourage students to explore language changes and to play with the possibilities of inventing it themselves.

Each unit included a grammar packet developed by Michael Thompson and based on his work, *The Magic Lens: A Spiral Tour Through the Human Ideas of Grammar* (1991). Thompson's packets were designed to help students learn why some ideas are clear and other are confused; to understand the power of grammar to reveal deep thinking and deep meaning. Implicit in this study was the idea that changing the grammar of a sentence or paragraph meant changing its meaning. Literature selections upon which the units were built and the students' own writing provided the context for studying grammar.

Language Processes

The processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking were studied as change processes. Discussion of literature was based on the premise that each person's interpretation and understanding of meaning would be different from another person's interpretation. Through listening to one another, students were encouraged to seek new meaning and to examine how their interpretations changed during the discussion. In like manner, students studied the writing process as a way to explore ideas and to generate their own thinking and learning. The revision stage of writing emphasized seeking feedback and listening to responses from teachers and peers. Considering another's perspective often led to changes in the understanding of one's own work and to subsequent changes in the structure and clarity of the writing.

Oral communications in these units centered on persuasive speaking and critical listening. Students studied how to change their audience's opinion and actions through argument formulation and strategies of persuasion. As students listened to persuasive speeches, they analyzed the arguments and evaluated their effectiveness. Resources for the speaking and listening components included videotapes of master persuaders such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Adloph Hitler that provided students with opportunities to consider the role of persuasion in social and historical contexts. Other resources such as *The American Reader: Words That Moved a Nation* (Ravitch, 1990) documented the persuasive role of oral communication modes such as orations, Congressional hearings, and songs in the process of change.

Literature

Each of the units centered on literature selections with vocabulary and language study emerging from the selections. The development of the concept of change also emerged from the literature discussions and activities. Typically each literary piece was examined for evidence of character changes, both physical and psychological, as well as social, political, and economic changes affecting societal settings of the literature studied. For instance in "The Power of Light" by I. B. Singer (1962) students discussed the issue of whether characters change themselves or are changed by events outside of their control.

In addition to the literature selections which were discussed with the total group, additional resources embedded in each unit illustrated the generalizations about change and addressed the social, cultural and environmental implications of change. For instance, *Commodore Perry in the Land of the Shogun* (Blumberg, 1985) documents the dramatic social and cultural changes created by Perry's visits to Japan in 1853 and 1854. Illustrated with reproductions of primary sources, the account presents misconceptions, hostilities, and humorous episodes encountered from multiple points of view. Change is palpable while reading the book. A very different book, *Letting Swift River Go* by Yolen (1992) tells of the drowning of a Swift River town for the building of the Quabbin Reservoir, a water supply for Boston and now a wilderness area. The open-ended story alludes to necessary tradeoffs and provides opportunities to discuss changes linked to time as well as the positive and negative aspects of change.

Conclusion

The idea of change crosses all disciplines and offers learners an opportunity to begin building a concept that will inform their lives in meaningful ways. Because of the accelerating rate of change, students will need effective tools for recognizing and coping with change throughout their lives. Language with its powers of inquiry, persuasion, and critique provides possibly the most powerful tool for understanding and coping with change.

Literature, in particular, offers students and teachers a rich content arena for analyzing change and for considering the issues that surround it. Literature captures the voices, the emotions, and the concerns of thinkers through the ages and across cultures. In a time of dizzying change, it offers continuity and an opportunity for reflection. Besides, literature injects fun into the study of any concept, including change.

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Creating a New Language Arts Curriculum for High Ability Learners

by

Joyce VanTassel-Baska

How children acquire language is one of the most fascinating areas we can study. Theories of language acquisition abound that view the source of literacy development in various ways--as primarily in the child (Chomsky, 1969; 1983), primarily in the environment (Skinner, 1957), or primarily in the social interactive effect between the two (Cazden, 1983). For gifted learners, we know that language development typically occurs early, appears to be spontaneous, and frequently is marked by developmental spurts where students move rapidly toward mastering basic reading processes and developing a large and advanced vocabulary (Durkins, 1966; Jackson, 1989; Roedell, Jackson, and Robinson, 1980). What are the implications of such behaviors for creating an appropriate language arts curriculum at K-8 levels? How might such a curriculum relate to new directions in language arts instruction? These are the central questions that guided the curriculum development work of the National Language Arts Project for High Ability Learners K-8.

While arguments for a high quality liberal program of study in the language arts have been consistent over the past ten years (Adler, 1982), the current state of language arts curriculum may be characterized as fragmented by both philosophical orientation and areas of emphasis. The whole language movement has attempted to integrate language arts areas, to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary work, and to encourage "meaning-making" on the part of the learner. The cultural literacy movement has attempted to stress the importance of students' developing a rich knowledge base in established works of literature and developing expository writing skills. A third movement has stressed the inclusion of multicultural literature and a global perspective to enhance language development in a culturally pluralistic society. The national standards movement has emphasized the need for world class standards that set high expectations for learners in the language arts at all levels of instruction. Each of these movements currently has both supporters and detractors in the language arts community.

Recent national reports in the language arts have called for a reconsideration of language arts curricula that use the best of classical and contemporary literature texts to teach language, writing, and literature through an inquiry-based approach (Suhor, 1984). Such reports also stress the importance of using such approaches throughout elementary and junior high school. Close and active reading of various genre is also encouraged even at the expense of broad coverage (National Assessment Governing Board, 1992). Constructivist theory as it is applied to the language arts has focused on the importance of students' creating meaning from existing sources particularly in the writing process (Spivey, 1990). Other theorists view the province of teaching language arts as using the classical canon and teaching traditional forms of writing (Hirsch, 1989; Thompson, 1991). Accompanying modes of assessment are being developed that reflect intensive involvement with literary works, focusing more on the processes of reading, the thought patterns of students engaged in it, and the power of thought brought to bear in connecting one work to another (NAEP, 1992). There exists, however, a significant gap between theory and practice. Researchers in literacy development generally have deplored the lack of curriculum research on testing what works in schools (Langer and Allington, 1992). One of the challenges, then, is to find ways to incorporate ideas about literacy development and put them into "testable" practice in the schooling process.

Research on how students learn also is critical to consider in developing new curriculum. Learning is an interactive process that brings together the learner, an activity or task, and the situation that surrounds them. Thus there is concern for ensuring a "holistic view" in a language arts curriculum. A literate environment provides rewarding experiences where students construct meaning for themselves in real situations. Students work collaboratively and use the teacher as a model. Learners engage in risk-taking and revising their work as a welcome part of their regular school experience. An integrated curriculum uses communication skills as interrelated processes which support each other and as enabling skills across all subject areas. In the integrated language arts, learners employ three cueing systems: semantic (meaning), syntactic (word order or grammar), and graphaphonic (sound/symbol). Outcome-based curriculum goals focus on whole-thinking processes (rather than sub-skills) that are at a sufficiently challenging conceptual level. A "thinking" curriculum requires awareness of one's own thinking including attitudes, habits, and dispositions as well as the critical and creative thinking processes about ideas. Such a language arts curriculum encourages and supports student responsibility for learning and encourages and supports student choice, collaboration, and active participation. Finally, such a curriculum needs to be aligned so that what is written is also taught and tested, allowing instruction and assessment to become interrelated areas.

Tchudi (1991) reviewed the materials on K-12 language arts curriculum and found the following elements a part of successful language arts programs:

- Teaching language in an integrated way rather than as a series of skills;
- Teaching language as a tool for learning and encouraging extensive use;
- Teaching language to promote community and connectedness, using the social and cultural experiences of students as a base;
- Using language study as a social event to encourage risk-taking and experimentation;
- Teaching to "authentic" assessment measures;
- Teaching language through open-ended activities;
- Teaching toward learning, with mistakes viewed as fundamental to the process;
- Teaching reading and writing as reciprocal acts;
- Teaching language as a symbol system that connects to art, music, and other symbol systems; and
- Teaching language arts through the use of archetypal activities such as: inquiry, shared writing and reading, independent writing, independent reading, read aloud and response, and sharing through discussion.

Research on the effectiveness of the whole language approach compared to the traditional, skill based approach to language learning suggests that they are approximately equal in their effects with some exceptions. Whole language approaches seem to be more effective in kindergarten than first grade, may produce stronger scores on word recognition than reading comprehension, and produce weaker effects with populations labeled specifically as disadvantaged than with those not specifically labeled. More recent studies, however, show a trend toward stronger effects for basal reading programs relative to whole language programs (Stahl and Miller, 1989). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (1992) has depicted reading literacy as a multi-purpose, multi-level set of experiences, moving from initial understanding to developing interpretation, to personal reflection and response, to demonstrating a critical stance. Through such a model, students contruct, extend, and examine meaning of texts either for the purpose of literary experience, information, or performance.

All of the new directions suggested by the theory and research of those in the language arts community tend to focus on some common themes for language arts curriculum reform in schools. These issues include:

- Making the learner the centerpiece for constructing meaning, using open-ended inquiry as a primary teaching tool.
- Integrating the language arts areas.
- Making connections to disciplines outside the language arts.
- Setting learner outcomes at high levels.
- Using authentic assessment
- Developing in students the skills, attitudes, and dispositions of good readers, writers, and communicators.
- Using literature that satisfies both classical and multicultural considerations.

The task of creating a new language arts curriculum must be responsive to these issues in order to be credible. By the same token, such a curriculum must recognize the elements of what is uniquely appropriate for high ability learners in the language arts.

Major Emphases Within Language Arts Curricula for High Ability Learners

What are the issues that need special emphasis and attention for high ability learners? The following emphases guided the process of curriculum development.

- Address the intellectual needs of high ability students through selecting rich and rigorous reading materials.

High ability students, as all students, need to learn and master the content and the skills deemed by society as essential in order to be a good "participant" in the society. However, it is also true that basal reading materials are inadequate to guide high ability students in the development of their potential. Language arts programs for identified high ability students should provide rigorous opportunities for the development of their academic and intellectual potential in all major areas of the discipline. Thus enhancing reading and literature programs through choice of substantive texts is a crucial component of appropriate curriculum.

- Foster the development of reasoning, especially critical and creative thinking.

While gifted students should have opportunities to understand the importance of performing the tasks and mastering the structures of traditional K-8 language arts curricula, they should also understand that mastery of a structure frees them to push beyond the boundaries and constraints of that form, to diverge into more creative patterns of thinking Even the very youngest student should be given repeated opportunities to try out traditional and non-traditional modes of inquiry. The classroom must provide repeated opportunities for gifted students to engage in various forms of thinking and inquiry that develop their capacity for applying high level reasoning to language arts study and beyond.

- Enhance the growth of metacognitive awareness and control.

Among the special talents that high ability students possess is the early and heightened ability to think about their own thinking, or metacognitive awareness. Along with encouraging the students to interact thoughtfully with works of literature, language arts programs for high ability learners should enhance the ability to examine critically their cognitive activities. In addition, then, to solving the problems involved in deriving meaning from a text or producing meaning through a text, gifted students should be encouraged to reflect on the ways that they plan, assess, evaluate, and revise their cognitive activities through meaningful research activities. Data on good readers indicate a high degree of metacognitive control already over the basic skills of reading. Good readers possess positive habits and attitudes about reading, read with enough fluency so that they can focus on the meaning of what they read, use what they already know to understand what they read, form an understanding of what they read and extend, elaborate, and critically judge its meaning, use a variety of effective strategies to aid their understanding and to plan, manage, and check the progress of their reading, and can read a wide variety of texts and can read for different purposes (NAEP, 1992).

- Encourage active learning.

Too often students merely react passively to what they hear or read. High ability students should be aware that they are active meaning makers not only in the stories that they create out of their own experience but also in their reading of literature. They need to be encouraged to see themselves as active readers and shapers of language. We must make them aware of the processes that they use to speak, read, and write, and the role of their communities in those processes of producing discourse.

- Heighten students' awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.

It is critical that high ability learners become especially sensitive to similarities and differences among and between cultures. Cultural diversity is a valuable resource and exposure to such diversity can provide genuine opportunities for personal growth. While not all materials in a language arts program will necessarily or explicitly explore cultural unity and diversity as a central theme, a special effort should be made to incorporate these materials. Given the importance of attitudinal factors in cognitive development, limited English proficiency students and students from minority groups within the dominant culture can be expected to benefit from the inclusion of materials which provide positive depictions of their cultural traditions. Moreover, students from the majority culture need a background in other cultures as well. Thus the inclusion and focus on multi-cultural materials is critical to a strong language arts program for high ability learners.

- Use collaborative learning techniques.

Since students are a valuable resource to each other, collaborative activities need to be fostered. Some of the most rewarding, unpredictable, and exciting learning occurs when peers collaborate on projects. Gifted students should be given opportunities to work on group projects where one student's ideas supplement, challenge, redirect a classmate's work. In particular, students should be given opportunities to receive oral and written responses from their intellectual peers. They should come to regard themselves as members of a learning community, and they should come to consider their classmates as valuable sources of feedback and as co-learners. Use of discussion groups, workshoping techniques for the writing process, panels, and debates are all strategies that can enhance collaborative learning.

- Explore interdisciplinary applications by connecting literature to art, music, social studies, and other relevant areas of study.

All students, but especially high ability students, need exposure to material that helps them overcome narrow disciplinary constraints and that allows them to explore ideas in a number of areas. They should be exposed to the similarities as well as the differences among artistic media. They should explore the literacies of the written, visual, and performing arts and engage in the excitement of discovering the ways that one artistic medium defines the limits of or merges with another. How does an illustrator portray fantastic characters from a fairy tale? How might one go about setting a poem to music? How does gesture depict a description of an action in a short story? We should encourage gifted students to cross artistic boundaries and to apply the visual, musical, or dramatic to reading and writing. Beyond these applications, high ability students can make interdisciplinary connections to an understanding of the cultural context within which a work of literature developed and to areas of study that use a common theme such as change.

- Foster independence.

By providing guidance, yet knowing when to let go, the ideal teacher provides the gifted student with a nurturing classroom of intellectual support as well as with the confidence to work on his or her own. The gifted student is thus encouraged to test out classroom instruction and to strike out, with the instructor's guidance, on her own. The instructor, then, often functions as a metacognitive coach who encourages students to take charge of what they have learned and to use their learning in independent ways.

- Encourage the exploration of issues of significance, using a variety of research techniques.

Students need to develop literary habits of mind that encourage them in using resources appropriately and well. Researching relevant issues of significance can be one avenue to develop such skills. By exploring an issue of real world relevance and interest to the learner, students can learn how to organize data to support an argument, how to develop an argument, how to evaluate various perspectives on an issue, and how to present their findings in oral and written forms.

The importance of creating a curriculum in the language arts that is responsive to both the demands of the language arts community and the gifted community also calls for paying attention to the special strands that have historically been termed "the language arts."

Major Curriculum Strands in Language Arts for High Ability Learners

The language arts is not a unified field of study; rather it has evolved historically from a set of separate traditions and strands of learning. Therefore, it is important to see curriculum development in the language arts as progressing on parallel tracks that need to merge and crisscross each other. Important strands include reading and literature, writing, language study, and oral communication (speaking and listening).

Reading and the Study of Literature

Studies of reading which have proliferated in the last 20 years have tended to focus on one of three areas: 1) the social world of reading with particular emphasis on the student as reader and teacher-child interactions (e.g., Cazden, 1988); 2) the basic mental processes of reading and textual features that address them (e.g., Palinson and Brown, 1984); and 3) classroom-based research that advocates more time on task among other recommendations (e.g., Carter, 1984). These three areas have not been addressed in a confluent way at the level of practice although the studies are not contradictory but rather center on different issues, and priorities. However, the world of practice has embraced certain features of these studies. The Reading Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English (1988) recommended a de-emphasis on the role of basals and standardized tests and a reconsideration of mandated curriculum. The State of California Framework (1987) and the NAEP report on reading (1992) both stress the need for a student-centered reading curriculum that centers on shared inquiry discussion techniques of authentic and worthy texts. Such recommendations line up well with issues of teaching reading to high ability learners.

The gifted child's major contact with the world of ideas is through literature. Books stimulate thought and provide the knowledge base required for creative thinking and problem solving. Intellectual growth in gifted children depends on their access to and regular involvement in the reading process. From the time of their earliest ability to read, they need access to a rich variety of fiction and nonfiction and opportunities to respond actively and creatively to what they are reading. Students should have abundant opportunities to discuss, analyze, and share the enjoyment of what they read with parents, teachers, and each other. Moreoever, they need to be guided by adults who model the processes of analyzing and discussing reading.

Several authors provide excellent guidance for teachers about good literature for the gifted and how to teach it to optimize learning and love of literature. In Books for the Gifted Child, Baskin and Harris (1980), suggest the following criteria for finding the right books for the gifted:

1. The language used in books for the gifted should be rich, varied, precise, complex, and exciting, for language is the instrument for the reception and expression of thought.
2. Books should be chosen with an eye to their open-endedness, their capacity to inspire contemplative behavior, such as through techniques of judging time sequences, shifting narrators, and unusual speech patterns of characters.
3. Books for the gifted should be complex enough to allow interpretative and evaluative behaviors to be elicited from readers.
4. Books for the gifted should help them build problem-solving skills and develop methods of productive thinking.
5. Books should provide characters as role models for emulation.
6. Books should be broad-based in form, from picture books to folktale and myths to non-fiction to biography to poetry to fiction (p. 46).

Polette (1982) and Polette and Hamlin (1980) also offer a wealth of ideas for structuring and conducting literature programs for the gifted. Literature programs at the high school level should involve gifted students in reading high quality adult literature and should help them develop skill and enthusiasm in the intellectual and aesthetic experience of literature.

The literature program for the verbally talented child needs to be very rich from the beginning of the language arts experience in school. Children who are reading by kindergarten need a strong literature program at that stage of their development. The use of a basal reading series typically focuses too much time and attention on mastering the reading process, particularly phonics, rather than on allowing gifted students the opportunity for holistic reading of good literature. One

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way to combat this problem is to build a strong literature program for the gifted K-8, infusing the best and most challenging selections at each stage of development. Programs like Junior Great Books and Paedaeia offer the best of classical and contemporary literature selections for students through junior high school.

In the area of selecting appropriate multicultural literature for gifted students, Norton (1987) poses several questions that need to be asked in assessing the appropriateness of materials. These questions include:

1. Are representatives of cultural groups portrayed as unique individuals in respect to character and physical appearance?
2. Does the author avoid stereotyping of cultural groups, including "model minority" and "bad minority" labels?
3. Is the culture of a minority group accurately portrayed and treated with respect?
4. In biography, are people of color represented accurately with flaws as well as virtues?
5. In fiction, do minority group characters handle their own problems rather than exhibit dependency?
6. If dialect is used, does it have a legitimate purpose?
7. Does the book correct historical omissions and errors about minority groups?
8. Does the book reflect the changing status of women of color by providing appropriate role models for girls?

Thus in selecting multicultural literature for use with all learners, we need to be sensitive to issues of accuracy, stereotypes, and modeling implications.

The literature program for the gifted should provide more than just good reading lists and advanced selections, however. It should provide a context for discussion among students of key issues, ideas, and themes contained in literature and be a catalyst for student writing, drawing, and performing. It should provide the basis for the critical thinking component of the language arts curriculum, helping students sharpen their analytical, interpretive, and evaluation skills.

At the elementary level, gifted students can be given carefully selected reading lists for reading at home. Books should be selected with an eye to the intellectual criteria listed earlier. In addition, establishing in-class reading clusters is an important tool for discussion. Reading aloud is also a valuable adjunct to such a program. Small group discussions about the following types of questions might be held at the primary level.

1. What happens in your book? Can you number the events? (sequencing)
2. Who is the most important person in the book? Why? Who is your favorite person in the book? (character development)
3. What new things did you learn from reading this book that you didn't know before? (concept formation)
4. What were your favorite words or sentences in the book? Why? (language awareness)
5. Good books make us feel as well as understand a story. What feelings did you have as you read the book? (identification)
6. How good was this book compared to others you have read? (evaluation) How would you rate it in respect to:
   a. interesting story
   b. characters I liked

c. good ideas
d. where it occurred was interesting
e. new things to think about.

Early readers should then be encouraged to read on their own and to think about their book using the small group discussion questions as guides.

Particular attention should also be paid to selecting books that promote positive role models for gifted girls such as the central protagonist being an excellent problem solver or possessing similar traits found in gifted girls. The use of biographies of eminent women and autobiographies also provide rich resources for gifted girls, providing them adult models for emulation. Selecting books that portray girls as doers, thinkers, and risk-takers also helps break down the traditional passivity associated with the portrayal of many female characters in literature.

Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy shares many of the components of a response-based literature program, and can be an accessible, natural tool for teachers and librarians as well as counselors. Gifted learners may be particularly well suited to bibliotherapy given their penchant for reading, their enthusiasm for asking questions, and their capacity for divergent thinking (Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982). Only a few adaptations are necessary in a response-based literature program to address the personal and social needs of gifted learners.

Halsted (1988) identifies three types of bibliotherapy--institutional, clinical, and developmental. In her construct, mental health professionals use institutional and clinical bibliotherapy with clients who have emotional or behavioral problems. Conversely, teachers, parents, librarians, and school counselors use developmental bibliotherapy to anticipate and meet needs before they become problems. Halsted advocates bibliotherapy as a means of helping gifted learners recognize and articulate the difficulties that surround being different and of confronting their reluctance to use their abilities.

Central to using bibliotherapy is an understanding of what it does for a reader. Halsted describes the four stages of bibliotherapy as identification, catharsis, insight, and universalization. In the first stage, a reader identifies with a character in the book, recognizing personal similarities and caring about the character. Catharsis allows the reader to release empathetic emotions for the character. The third stage of insight, occurs when the reader applies the character's situation to his or her own life. Finally universalization is the reader's recognition that difficulties and sense of difference are not his or hers alone.

An integrated literature model addresses an additional counseling need of gifted learners: communication of feelings. In isolation, bibliotherapy speaks to the reader's emotions and self-understanding. In the broader context of a response-based literature program, it provides a forum for practicing a range of communication skills. Students recognize, label, and honor feelings: they articulate fears; they listen and learn to reflect another's feelings; they work cooperatively; they learn to support a personal point of view; and they communicate formally with an audience through their presentation.

Halsted also cites important criteria for the emotional development of gifted students through assessing literature with an eye to its bibliotherapy value. These criteria are:

- Characters should be coping with the same problems the readers are facing.
- The characters stand alone or in a small group for their convictions.
- A character may be different from his peers and learning to cope with the difference.
- The characters may be learning to accept someone else who is different.
- Adult characters should be present and supportive in at least some of the books.
- Some characters should be gifted adults.
- Some of the child characters should clearly be gifted themselves.
- Giftedness need not necessarily be labeled.
- Characters should be open-minded, questioning, with a passion for learning everything or devoted to one subject of intense interest.
- Characters should be struggling with issues of personal or moral courage, personal values, and moral and ethical choices.
- Some books should have humor of a high level.

Once books have been selected using these criteria, teachers may develop questions for discussion that probe the affective elements cited.

Such a set of criteria should be useful to practitioners in selecting emotionally rich reading material for gifted students.

Role of Libraries

Able learners may be predisposed to use libraries by their early reading, their internal need for information, and their desire to communicate with the world. These children can be undemanding library clients, grateful for unfettered access to resources. Occasionally, one may discover a home-away-from-home and become a habitue of a particular library or find a special friend in the librarian. Librarians, on the other hand, appreciate having a self-motivated, intellectual clientele. The two groups often coexist peacefully but without a dynamic, interactive relationship. Ironically, librarians may be neglecting the children most likely to become active, mature library users.

Both the Association for Library Service to Children and American Association of School Librarians include in their missions the goal of meeting the individual needs of the child or student. Because gifted learners have unusual capabilities, they have specific intellectual, social, and emotional needs. These needs are best met through the collaborative efforts of parents, schools, and community agencies. Gifted learners need high-level, multifaceted programs in the community as well as in school.

Numerous opportunities exist to target gifted learners with library resources and expertise of adults with the talents of children. Library-based programs offer children extended time to pursue an interest or idea in depth. They can assemble a peer group that can challenge one another to accomplish the best possible product (Boyce, Bailey, and VanTassel-Baska, 1990). Library workshops can offer children opportunities to link and synthesize their knowledge of literature with the writing process and bookmaking to create an original product. Equally as important, such programs can harness the resources and expertise of librarians, teachers, and parents in offering programs for young people in a variety of settings.

Writing and Composition

Current National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data in writing (1992) demonstrate limited emphasis on expository writing and greater emphasis on more creative forms, with the result being that writing samples of students' best work at grades 4 and 8 evidence mediocre control of the writing process and very limited competency in developing argument. Such a result might have been predicted from recent earlier studies. Applebee (1984) analyzed three popular high school writing texts and found that writing assignments were predominantly evaluative, seeking right answers rather than reflection from students and calling for limited responses. In a comprehensive survey of writing in high school, Applebee (1981) found only 10% of writing time being spent in composing more than a paragraph. More recently, Cooper and Brenenan (1988) recommended more direct instruction in teaching writing and requisite thinking, in order to master various forms, wide reading and analysis of texts, and sustained literacy programs for all. Thus a critical issue to consider in the language arts is how to integrate a comprehensive writing program that provides extensive experiences in expository writing.

Writing opportunities for the gifted should begin early and provide an abundance of opportunities to write. Writing is a thinking process, and through writing experiences the gifted child can develop excellence in the capacity to think as well as to write. Very young children who may lack the motor coordination to write may nevertheless be engaged in writing-related activities through special teaching techniques such as tape recording, illustration, and invented spelling.

The fundamental skills associated with a process writing approach need to be used with gifted learners at all stages of development. Specifically these are:

Prewriting
Paragraph development
Theme development
Development of introductions and endings
Work on supporting details
Effective use of figures of speech
Editing
Teacher/peer conferencing
Revising
Rewriting

Each of these steps is a valuable part of students' acquiring the skills and habits of writing. There exists a clear need to ensure that all of these writing strategies are used at all levels of schooling with high ability learners.

Also important consideration needs to be given to the type of writing that gifted students are encouraged to master. A good balance needs to be struck between impressionistic creative writing forms and analytic expository writing forms. Keeping the NAEP portfolio data in mind, all students are particularly weak in persuasive writing. As Marzano (1991) points out, there is also a need for balance in how we assess the writing experience. Emphasis on quality of thinking as well as mechanics is required.

Language Study

> *I think that grammar is so lovely that even if it were utterly useless, one would still irresistibly explore it, as one explores chess, or architecture, or the spiral geometries of shells. Grammar is a sort of magic aesthetic lens, through which we can view the delicate structures upon which ideas rest. As scientists marvel at the silicate skeletal frames which support and form living organisms, through grammar we can view the delicate relationships which give form and pattern to the phenomena of the mind. If this comparison strikes you as idealistic and metaphorical, please consider it further. These relationships do exist, and they are beautiful.*
>
> --Michael Thompson

The language arts program for the gifted should offer opportunities to study the English language. VanTassel-Baska, et al. (1988) suggested that the goals for an English language program should be to understand the syntactic structure of English (grammar) and its concomitant uses (usage); to promote vocabulary development; to foster an understanding of word relationships (analogies) and origins (etymology); and to develop an appreciation for semantics, linguistics, and the history of language.

Because gifted children exhibit individual differences in their mastery of the language skills of grammar, usage, and vocabulary, these segments of a program for the gifted must be highly individualized to accommodate individual levels of proficiency. Pretesting of skills and vocabulary always should be carried out, and instructional activities and materials should be determined diagnostically on the basis of pretest results.

The programs of study for the English language can profit immensely from the existence of a concurrent foreign language study program or at least a study of vocabulary idioms and common phrases from other languages. Gifted children can benefit a great deal from the study of a second language also to enhance their grasp of the structure and semantics of their own language. Foreign language study may begin as early as kindergarten or first grade and be continuous throughout high school and into college. Mastery of a second (and third) language gives the gifted student a comprehensive understanding of the comparative structure of languages and their related cultures.

The major goals of a foreign language program for the gifted should be to develop proficiency in reading, speaking, and writing in two languages; to learn the culture and traditions that shape language; to be challenged by the interrelationships across languages in respect to form and meaning; and to appreciate and understand language systems. The rich opportunities for foreign language study closely follow these concepts.

Oral Communication

Oral mastery and use of language are critical parts of the language arts program. The thinking process involved in experiencing literature and in writing are linked intimately to and can be enhanced by oral language experience. Through planned experiences in discussion, debate, oral reading and interpretation, oral reports, dramatics and panel presentations, gifted youth can learn to think effectively in and through the language, and they can learn to write more effectively.

At the primary and elementary levels, gifted children can learn to read aloud from storybooks with expressiveness, can learn to verbalize ideas through creative dramatics, and can begin to give oral reports and presentations. Beginning at the fourth or fifth level, they can engage in the more cognitively demanding activities of debate, acting, and research reporting. Middle school and high school classroom discussions can become strongly analytical, theoretical, and abstract and can deal with values and judgment. Improvisation and extemporaneous presentations, as well as formal debate, can provide high-level oral language experiences for the gifted.

Another aspect of oral communication that needs to be promoted with gifted learners is in the area of evaluative listening. Helping students to judge the credibility of speakers, to recognize points of view and to analyze patterns of argument all contribute to facilitating student speaking skills.

Needs of At-Risk Gifted Children

Able learners in general show early signs of advanced verbal behaviors: early reading, strong interest in books and reading, fascination with words, and the desire and ability to express ideas in written form. These characteristics demand a responsive environment which can feed the child's intellectual needs. Children from low income families, culturally diverse backgrounds, dysfunctional families or those who have physical or learning handicaps have an even greater need for specially tailored programs.

Gifted programs in the language arts are an important means for promising learners who are at-risk in some way to access maximum educational opportunities. Yet a recent study of programs and services for disadvantaged gifted students nationally (VanTassel-Baska, Patton and Prillaman, 1991) revealed that only eight states provide any form of differentiated service to low income and/or minority children of promise other than what is provided in a regular gifted program. Fewer than 50 local programs are seriously addressing this issue; of these programs, only six are focusing on children below third grade.

Attention to tailoring the verbal arts curriculum more appropriately to meet the needs of at-risk learners may be necessary. Based on our current knowledge base of successful interventions with these special populations (VanTassel-Baska, 1991), the following adaptations are suggested for classroom practice and parental/community follow-up:

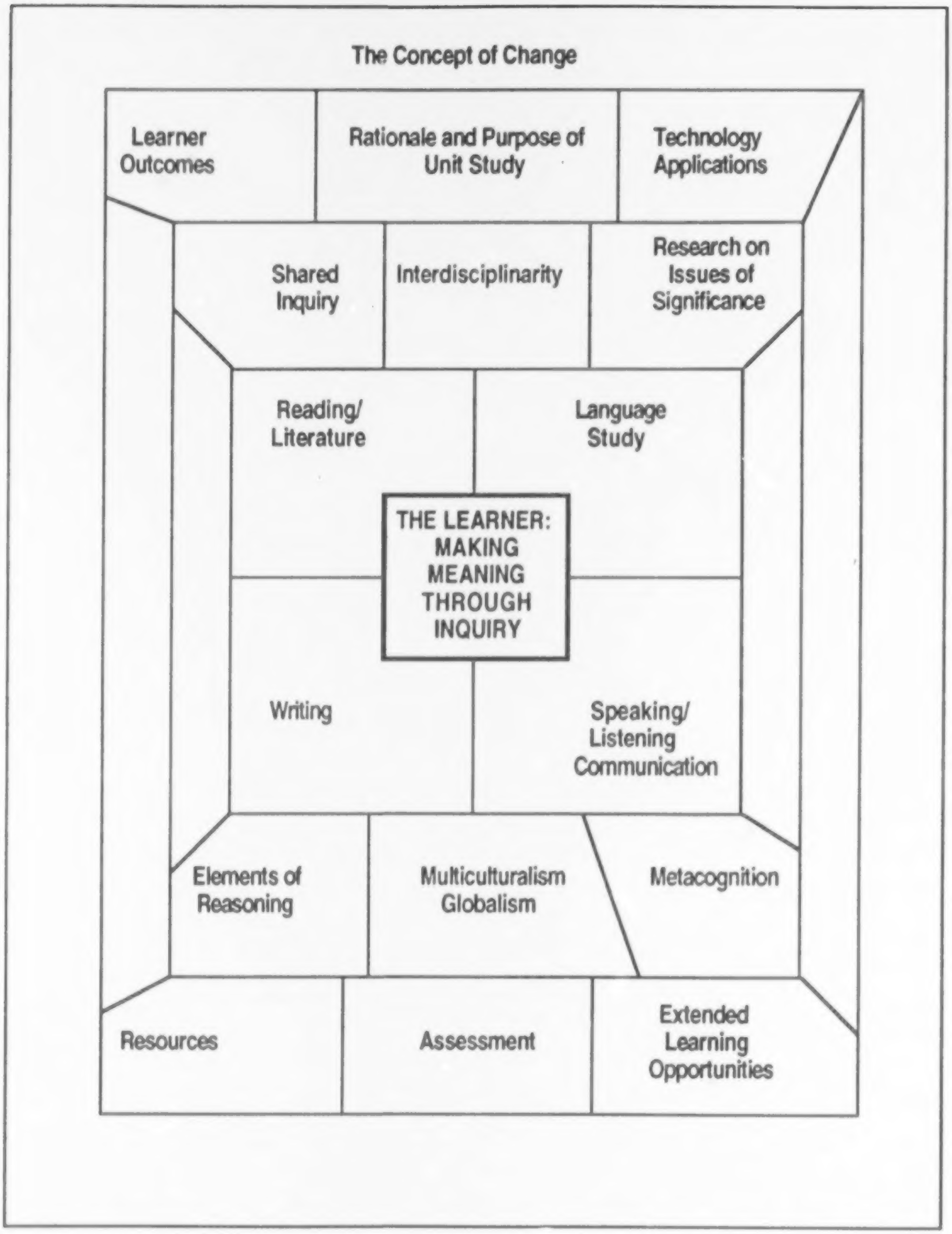
- Presence of information on various cultural groups
- Contributions of minorities included
- Avoidance of cultural stereotyping
- Use of interactive strategies
- Use of expressive activities (oral language, movement, artistic)
- Use of analogical reasoning activities
- Use of creative synthesis activities
- Frequent positive reinforcement
- Enhancement of realistic perceptions of competence

Clearly the language arts is the most fruitful area of the curriculum to promote these practices since language arts classrooms already are the most interdisciplinary and are more likely to employ multicultural material for teaching and learning. Such adaptations can prove helpful in enhancing the development of potential in at-risk learners whose needs require attention beyond those provided to more advantaged gifted students.

Conclusion

Language arts curriculum for high ability learners must proceed from a firm grounding in the needs of the learner to make meaning through inquiry, a basic cornerstone of new language arts emphasis. The use of high quality, multicultural literature as a catalyst to engaging in all language arts activities is also essential. Such a curriculum should incorporate all major strands of the language arts; namely, reading and literature, writing, oral communication, and language study, into an integrated set of experiences for learners. Moreover, it should contain the important emphases valued by the language arts community such as multicultural and global issues, interdisciplinarity and metacognition. It should also continue to highlight those features of a curriculum highly valued in gifted education: advanced level work, reasoning skills, and research on significant issues. The curriculum also needs to be responsive to key curriculum design features such as rationale and purpose, learner outcomes, the use of technology, resources, authentic assessment, and extended learning opportunities. Lastly, new language arts curriculum at K-8 must be conceptually oriented, allowing students to explore a concept in depth rather than teaching skills in isolation. Table I portrays the framework for developing such a curriculum, and Appendix A provides a set of guiding questions derived from the state of the art papers and curriculum framework to assist the process.

Table I
Creating a New Language Arts Curriculum


The Concept of Change
Learner Outcomes
Rationale and Purpose of Unit Study
Technology Applications
Shared Inquiry
Interdisciplinarity
Research on Issues of Significance
Reading/ Literature
Language Study
THE LEARNER: MAKING MEANING THROUGH INQUIRY
Writing
Speaking/ Listening Communication
Elements of Reasoning
Multiculturalism Globalism
Metacognition
Resources
Assessment
Extended Learning Opportunities

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Appendix A

Key Questions to Answer While Developing a New Language Arts Unit

I. General Criteria

Student Outcomes:

- Are the student outcomes significant or contrived for convenience?
- Do outcomes include both content and process?

Topic/Content:

- Is the area of study important to the understanding of the language arts?
- Does the area lend itself to interdisciplinary study?
- Can the selected concept be honestly represented in this area?

Assessments:

- Are the assessments "authentic?"
- Do the assessments measure the student outcomes?
- Are the assessments varied in type and structure?

Resources:

- Are multiple resources being used?
- Are opportunities for learning how to use resources built in?
- Are non-print resources being utilized?

Technology:

- Are students required to use technology as a writer and researcher would use it?
- Is the technology relatively current?
- Is the technology appropriate for the age level of the student and the nature of the task?
- Does the technology require learning beyond simple operational knowledge of a machine?

Extended Learning Opportunities

- Are students challenged to engage in learning beyond the school year, on vacations, and weekends?
- Are students provided with high level homework assignments?
- Are parents oriented to their potential role in extended learning?

II. Specific Language Arts Emphases

Whole Language Approach:

- Does the unit integrate the language arts areas as much as possible?
- Are there interrelated opportunities for reading, speaking, and writing?
- Do students engage with the richest literature possible?

Multiculturalism/Globalism:

- Is there evidence of global thinking and interdependence in the perspectives presented?
- Is there an emphasis on futurism as seen in approaches to problem-solving, use of scenarios, etc.?
- Do the units incorporate the best of multicultural literature and culture?
- Is there a balanced perspective on at least three diverse cultures?
- Are the contributions of various cultural groups embedded rather than treated separately?

Elements of Reasoning:

- Does the unit incorporate techniques for enhancing reasoning and varied thinking skills?
- Does the unit include questions for discussion that emphasize higher level thinking?
- Do the unit activities engage the learner in reflective thought?

Inquiry-Based Instructional Techniques:

- Are students allowed to discuss new ideas?
- Are students provided an environment where risk-taking (and making mistakes) is considered an important part of learning?
- Do students discover ideas and concepts more often than they are told?
- Does the teacher model good thinking practices for students?
- Does the teacher reflect on the students' thinking as well as their knowledge?

Metacognition:

- Are there opportunities built into the unit to allow students to think about their thinking strategies?
- Are there opportunities for teachers to reveal their thinking to students (model metacognition)?

Research Process:

- Are students provided the skills and responses necessary to explore a relevant issue?
- Is there enough latitude for students to develop their own issue?
- Are the students encouraged to participate in/develop researchable questions?
- Does the issue of significance allow students to act as social scientists?

Interdisciplinary Applications:

- Does the topic naturally bring language arts and other disciplines together?
- Can the concept being studied also be demonstrated in other disciplines?

III. Specific Language Arts Strand Emphases

Reading/Literature:

- Do the units reflect choice of literature based on intellectual, affective, and multicultural considerations?
- Do the units emphasize expectations for advanced reading behaviors?
- Do the units incorporate textual analysis of conceptually rich material?
- Do the units emphasize inquiry-based discussion?
- Do the units link reading activities to other language arts activities?

Writing:

- Do the units use concept mapping to teach outlining?
- Do the units emphasize persuasive writing?
- Do the units focus on strategies for developing a thesis statement, providing supportive evidence, and drafting a conclusion?
- Do the units reflect the use of revision in the writing process?
- Do the units reflect the use of workshopping techniques (peer review and discussion of each other's writing)?

Language Study:

- Do the units emphasize the development of word relationships, such as synonyms, antonyms, and analogies?
- Do the units include opportunities to learn appropriate level vocabulary?
- Do the units encourage the development of linguistic competence in English, with emphasis on grammatical structure?
- Do the units include opportunities to learn about the history of language, etymology, and/or semantics?

Speaking/Listening Communication:

- Do the units provide opportunities for students to engage in active speaking and listening activities?
- Do the units promote the use of persuasive speaking?
- Do the units promote involvement of students in responding to each others' presentations through questions, discussion, and critique?
- Do the units address critical thinking skills through listening and speaking?